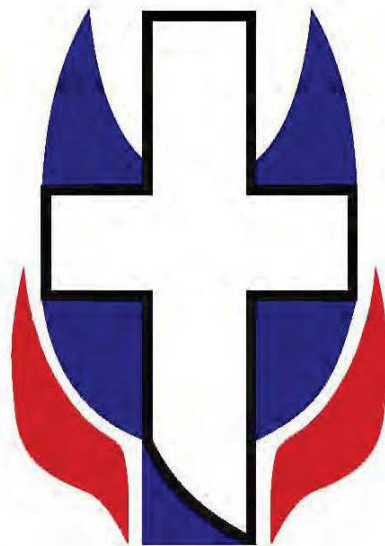


THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA



NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

**PAPERS FOR THE EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION 2024**

**PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA, AND
HYBRID VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM**

23-27 June 2024

THEME: STRONGER TOGETHER"

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UPCSA MODERATORS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

YEAR	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	EXECUTIVE COMMISSION	NAME OF MODERATOR	PRESBYTERIES VISITED
1999	Port Elizabeth	Bryanston	The Rev CW Leeuw FICB	Drakensberg & Zambia
2000	Gordon's Bay	Pretoria	The Rev AD Vorster BD, MTh	EGoli
2001	Benoni	Parkview	The Rev MT Chigwida BA, MDiv	Limpopo & E.Griqualand
2002	Pretoria	Strubensvalley	The Rev MK Boshomane DipTheol,BTh(Hons)	Thekwini
2003	East London	Mulbarton	The Rev GA Duncan Bed, BD. MTh, DTh	Zimbabwe & Zambia
2004	Bryanston	Benoni	The Rev J Pillay BTh.(Hons) MTh, PhD	Mthatha
2005		Kempton Park	The Rev J Pillay BTh.(Hons) MTh, PhD	Transkei
2006		Botha's Hill, Kwa Zulu Natal	The Rev J Pillay BTh.(Hons) MTh, PhD	Western Cape
2006	Livingstone		The Rev WD Pool BA (Hons)	
2007		Orlando	The Rev WD Pool BA (Hons)	Thukela
2008		Gcuwa, Butterworth	The Rev WD Pool BA (Hons)	
2008	Eston, Kwa Zulu Natal		The Rev C Mkandawire DipTh, BTh	
2009		Moregloed, Tshwane	The Rev C Mkandawire DipTh, BTh	Free State
2010		No Exco	The Rev C Mkandawire DipTh, BTh	Tshwane
2010	Vereeniging, Leko		The Rev Dr G Marchinkowski BA BD DMin	
2011			The Rev Dr G Marchinkowski BA BD DMin	Leko
2012		Perridgevale, Port Elizabeth	The Rev Dr G Marchinkowski BA BD DMin	Central Cape
2012	Stellenbosch, Western Cape		The Rev RJ Botsis BA	Amathole
2013		Kimberley	The Rev RJ Botsis BA	Limpopo
2014	Limpopo		The Rev ME Ramulondi BTh (Hons)	Zimbabwe
2015		East Griqualand	The Rev ME Ramulondi BTh (Hons)	Mthatha
2016	East London		The Rev Dr R Munthali BTh PhD	Transkei
2017		Harare, Zimbabwe	The Rev Dr R Munthali BTh PhD	Highveld
2018	Highveld		The Rev Dr P Langerman (DMin)	eGoli
2019		Central Cape Port Elizabeth	The Rev Dr P Langerman (DMin)	eThekwini
2020	Emergency on Zoom Platform		The Rev Dr P Langerman (DMin)	
2021	Pietermaritzburg and Zoom platform		The Rev Siph Mtetwa Dip Theol, BTh, MTh	Trans Xhariep, Western Cape

2022		Central Office and Zoom Platform	The Rev Sipho Mtetwa Dip Theol, BTh, MTh	Central Cape
2023	Harare and Zoom Platform		The Rev Lydia C Neshangwe B. Com, M. Div	
2024		Pretoria, Central Office and Zoom Platform	The Rev Lydia C Neshangwe B. Com, M. Div	Drakensberg

UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024
FIRST DRAFT AGENDA
(STRONGER TOGETHER)

AGENDA

SESSION	TIME	EVENT	LENGTH
<u>SUNDAY, 23 JUNE 2024:</u>			
FIRST	10H00	Constituting/Opening Service <i>Welcome</i> <i>Public Worship</i> <i>Roll of Commissioners</i> <i>Moderator's Message</i> <i>Holy Communion</i> <i>In Memoriam Minutes</i> <i>Recognition of Retiring Ministers</i>	120
	13H30	LUNCH	60
SECOND	14H30	General Session <i>Reading of the Notices of Motion by the movers</i> <i>Allocation of Notices of Motion</i> <i>Overtures & Petitions</i> <i>Assembly Business Committee</i> <i>Clerk of Assembly</i>	60
	15H30	TEA	
THIRD	16H00	Listening Session (1) <i>General Secretary</i> GENERAL ASSEMBLY CLUSTER <i>AARP Court of Assembly</i> <i>Communications</i> <i>Church Office and Human Resources</i>	90
	17H30	Evening Devotions	10
	18H00	Insaka Session (1) <i>General Secretary</i> <i>AARP Court of Assembly</i> <i>Communications</i> <i>Church Office and Human Resources</i>	60
	19H00	SUPPER	
<u>MONDAY, 24 JUNE 2024:</u>			
	07H30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	
FOURTH	08H30	Morning Devotions	30

	09H00	Decision Session (1) <i>General Secretary</i> <i>AARP Court of Assembly</i> <i>Communications</i> <i>Church Office and Human Resources</i>	90
	10H30	<u>TEA</u>	30
FIFTH	11H00	Listening Session (2)	120
		GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION CLUSTER <i>Finance</i> <i>Audit</i> <i>Pension Funds</i> <i>Manual</i> <i>Nominations</i> <i>Assembly Standing Commission</i>	
	13H00	<u>LUNCH</u>	60
SIXTH	14H00	Listening Session (3)	90
		WORSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE CLUSTER <i>Worship</i> <i>Health and Wellness</i> <i>Stewardship</i> <i>Priorities and Resources</i>	
	15H30	Devotions	10
		<u>TEA</u>	30
SEVENTH	16H00	Insaka Session (2) <i>Finance</i> <i>Audit</i> <i>Pension Funds</i> <i>Manual</i> <i>Nominations</i> <i>Assembly Standing Commission</i> <i>Worship</i> <i>Health and Wellness</i> <i>Stewardship</i> <i>Priorities and Resources</i>	120
	18H30	<u>SUPPER</u>	
<u>TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2024:</u>			
	07H30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	60
EIGHTH	08H30	Morning Devotions	15
	09H00	Decision Session (2) <i>Finance</i> <i>Audit</i> <i>Pension Funds</i> <i>Manual</i> <i>Nominations</i> <i>Assembly Standing Commission</i> <i>Worship</i> <i>Health and Wellness</i> <i>Stewardship</i> <i>Priorities and Resources</i>	120

	11H00	<u>TEA</u>	30
NINTH	11H30	Listening Session (4)	90
		SERVICE AND WITNESS CLUSTER <i>Ecumenical Relationships</i> <i>Ethics and Discipline</i> <i>Church in Society</i>	
	13H00	<u>LUNCH</u>	60
TENTH	14H00	Listening Session (4) Continued	60
		<i>Church Fellowships</i> <i>People with Disabilities</i>	
	15H30	Devotions	10
		<u>TEA</u>	30
ELEVENTH	16H30	Insaka Session (3) <i>Ecumenical Relationships</i> <i>Ethics and Discipline</i> <i>Church in Society</i> <i>Church Fellowships</i> <i>People with Disabilities</i>	90
	18H00	<u>SUPPER</u>	60
<u>WEDNESDAY, 26JUNE 2024:</u>			
	07H30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	
TWELFTH	08H30	Morning Devotions	30
	09H00	Decision Session (3) <i>Ecumenical Relationships</i> <i>Ethics and Discipline</i> <i>Church in Society</i> <i>Church Fellowships</i> <i>People with Disabilities</i>	90
	10H30	<u>TEA</u>	30
THIRTEENTH	11H00	Listening Session (5)	90
		PREACHING AND TEACHING CLUSTER <i>Mission and Discipleship</i> <i>Ministry</i> <i>Education and Training</i> <i>Doctrine</i>	
	13H00	<u>LUNCH</u>	60
	14H00	UPCSA'S 10 YEAR PROGRAMME: Going for Growth. Sowing, growing, and reaping	
	15H30	Devotions	10
		<u>TEA</u>	30

FOURTEENTH	16H30 Insaka Session (4) <i>Mission and Discipleship Ministry Education and Training Doctrine</i>	90
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18H00	<u>SUPPER</u>	60
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THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2024:

07H30	<u>BREAKFAST</u>	60
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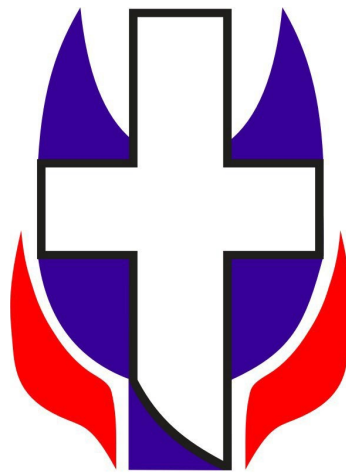
FIFTEENTH	08H30 Morning Devotions	15
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08H45	Decision Session (4) Mission and Discipleship Ministry Education and Training Doctrine <i>Nominations (Final Draft if available)</i>	90
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SIXTEENTH	11H00 Closing Service During the service, the Moderator Designate will be invited to introduce his theme.	60
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12H00	LUNCH	60
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13H00	Departures	
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NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

ADMINISTRATION

**ROLL OF COMMISSIONERS TO EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024
PAPERS FOR EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024**

Name & Surname	M/F
Ex Officio	
The Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe	F
The Rev Siphon Mtetwa	M
The Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni	M
The Rev Vusi Mkhungo	M
The Rev Melanie Cook	F
Mr Ryan Johnson	M
The Rev Dr Amon Kasambala	M
Amathole	
Rev Luzuko Qina	M
Ms Nosipho Mdedetyana	F
Alternates	
Mpho Khetsi	M
Gladys Booth	F
Central Cape	
Rev Armando Sontange	M
Ms Ngabisa Mtshake	F
Alternates	
Sandiso Njeza	M
Nomawethu Nelani	F
Copperbelt	
Rev Richard Mkandawire	M
Mr Jeremiah Ndhovu	M
Alternates	
Rev Lazarus Chirwa	M
Elder Sheila Kumwenda	F
Democratic Republic of Congo	
Rev Dr Allan Zibondo	M
Drakensberg	
Rev Nozinhle Madlala	F
Mr Lucky Majosi	M
Alternates	
Pumlani Buso	M
Vilakazi Nonhlanhla	F
East Griqualand	
Rev. Shona Van der Lingen	F
Ms P.P Nonkonyana	F
Alternates	
Rev. L.J Ruka	M
Elder M.W Goqa	
eGoli	
Rev Christopher Judelsohn	M

Ms Ntombi Currie	F
Alt.	
Tieho Letsheleha	M
Sisa Mtwana	M
eThekweni	
Rev Sibusiso Zungu	M
Mr Aaron Nhlabathi	M
Alt.	
Rev Jeremy Smith	M
Valmai du Toit	F
Highveld	
Rev Nelson Manabile	M
Ms Lorraine Kubeka	F
Alternates	
Rev Ziphilele Lubambo	M
Elder Tom Borill	M
Lekoa	
Rev Xolelwa Kobese	F
Mr Dan Mosounyane	M
Alternates	
Rev Robert Thema	M
Elder Thozama Songqishe	M
Limpopo	
Rev Khonani M Maselesele	M
Mr M. Joe Mashala	M
Alternates	
Rev M Dick	M
Elder Sarah Mthapo	F
M'chinga	
Rev Edward Chirwa	M
Mr Benson Njobvu	M
Alternates	
Rev Nyirongo Moyo Jennie	F
Elder Rhoda Manda Mtande	F
Mthatha	
The Rev. Mthobi Jita	M
Ms Nonkanyiso Ngqeleni	F
Alternates	
The Rev. Nkululeko Nojoko	M
Elder. Mxolisi Zibi	M
Munali	
Rev Kennedy M'hone	M
Ms Anna Chulu	F
Alternates	
Rev Judith Mkandawire	F
Elder Mathew Mkandawire	M

Thukela	
Rev Thabane Masikane	M
Ms Khanyisile O Ngubane	F
Alternates	
Rev A Nyawo	M
Elder PNV Mthembu	F
Tiyo Soga	
Rev. Peter Mpeke	M
Ms Nokuzola Madingana	F
Alternates	
Rev. Phamoli Motebele	M
Elder Vatiswa Qaba	F
Trans Xhariep	
Rev Charles M.M Letseleha	M
Mr Lewatle J Ramokopu	M
Alternates	
Rev B. Ngebulana	F
Mrs M.L Taaibos	F
Tshwane	
Rev Matshidiso Piroe	F
Mr Thabo Masete	M
Alternates	
Rev Sharon Simelane	F
Ms Kgomotso Kgwale	F
Western Cape	
Rev Natalie Gordon	F
Mr Malibongwe Gwele	M
Alternates	
Rev Unathi Ntseke	F
Ms Thulani Nayo	F
Zimbabwe	
Rev Talkmore Chilanga	M
Ms Fannie Mkorongo	F
Alternates	
Rev Gleness Magovere	F
Mr Joseph Chirara	M
Synod of Zambia	
Rev Sauros Phaika	M
Rev Thomson Mkandawrie	M

INSAKA GROUPS FOR EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

GROUP ONE	
Name & Surname	M/F
Mr Jeremiah Ndlovu	M
Ms Anna Chulu	F
Mr Lucky Majosi	M
Ms Ntombi Currie	F
Rev Sibusiso Zungu	M
Rev Xolelwa Kobese	F
Rev Luzuko Qina	M
Rev Charles M.M Letseleha	M
Rev Natalie Gordon	F
GROUP TWO	
Name & Surname	M/F
Rev Sauros Phaika	M
Rev Richard Mkandawire	M
Rev Shona Van der Lingen	F
Rev Khonani Maselesele	M
Rev Mthobi Jita	M
Rev Thabane Masikane	M
Mr Aaron Nhlabathi	M
Ms Nokuzola Madingana	F
Mr Malibongwe Gwele	M
Mr Thabo Masete	M
Ms Fannie Mkorongo	F
GROUP THREE	
Name & Surname	M/F
Ms Nosipho Mdedetyana	F
Mr L.J Ramokopu	M
Ms P.P Nonkonyana	F
Ms Lorraine Kubeka	F
Mr Dan Mosounyane	M
Rev Edward Chirwa	M
Rev. Peter Mpeke	M
Rev Talkmore Chilanga	M
Rev Thomson Mkandawire	M
Rev Armando Sontange	M
Rev Dr Allan Zibondo	M
GROUP FOUR	
Name & Surname	M/F
Rev Matshidiso Piroe	F
Rev Nozinhle Madlala	F
Rev Christopher Judelsohn	M
Rev Nelson Manabile	M
Rev Kennedy M'hone	M
Mr MJ Mashala	M
Mr Benson Njobvu	M
Ms Nonkanyiso Ngqeleni	F
Ms Khanyisile Ngubane	F
Ms Nqabisa Mtshake	F

THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

STANDING ORDERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

1. WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION?

The Executive Commission meets once every two years in the year that the General Assembly does not meet. It consists of its office bearers as specified in paragraph 13.9 (a) along with Commissioners appointed by Presbyteries as reflected in paragraph 13.9 (b) of Manual of Faith and Order. The 2024 Executive Commission will be a hybrid, where the officials will be attending physically and the Presbytery Commissioners virtually.

2. WHO IS REGULARLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION?

2.1 The association of Church members with the Executive Commission is in line with clause 12.68 of the *Manual of Faith and Order*. The association of any particular person may be moved at the beginning of any Session of Executive Commission, after consultation with the Clerk or Business Convener of Assembly.

2.2 Any fraternal delegate of a sister Church, local minister invited to bring greetings, representative of an organisation, or individual invited to address the Executive, is for that purpose accorded the status of associate as defined in paragraph 12.68 of the *Manual of Faith and Order*, upon adoption of these Standing Orders.

Associates at the Executive Commission have the right to speak, but not to vote. Only Commissioners may vote. Associates may also not "move" a proposal on the floor of the Executive Commission.

In terms of 14.16 of the Manual of Faith and Order; Associates and others who are not Commissioners must leave the Council when any business is conducted in a "private sitting or in Camera."

3. PROCEDURE PRIOR TO SITTING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

3.1. Approximately three months prior to the meeting of Executive Commission, the Clerk of Assembly shall issue to each Presbytery Clerk forms for the commissioning of ministers and elders to the forthcoming Executive Commission. Each Presbytery then elects its Commissioners to the Executive Commission in terms of paragraph 13.9 (b) of Manual of Faith and Order.

3.2 Completed forms detailing the names, addresses and telephone numbers of Commissioners and their Alternates shall be returned by each Presbytery Clerk to the Clerk of Assembly (paragraph 12.6) not later than two months prior to the meeting.

3.3 Should any Presbytery find it necessary to appoint a substitute for a Commissioner unable to attend Executive Commission, his/her name,

address and telephone number shall be submitted to the Clerk of Assembly not later than 10 days before the Executive Commission convenes. Any substitute shall be accepted as a regularly appointed Commissioner when the Roll of Commissioners is amended upon presentation to the Executive Commission.

- 3.4 The onus of passing on Papers for the Executive Commission and other briefings or resources supplied by the Clerk of Assembly to a substitute, rests upon anyone who is unable to fulfil his/her commission. This should be done in consultation with his/her Presbytery Clerk.
- 3.5. Two months before the commencement of the Executive Commission every Commissioner shall register themselves via ZOOM application in preparation for the dry runs. Registering for the dry runs will grant automatic access to Executive Commission too.
- 3.5 Any alleged irregularity regarding the appointment of a Commissioner brought to the attention of the Clerk of Assembly shall be referred to the Business Committee for examination and report to the Executive Commission.
- 3.6 Commissioning by a Presbytery obliges a commissioner to be present for the whole period of the Executive Commission. Leave of absence for any period must be applied for, stating reasons, through the person/s assigned to consider these applications. The Clerk shall report on each application to the Executive Commission and move that it be granted or otherwise.

Commissioners are encouraged to acquaint themselves with the rules by which the Executive Commission operates before coming to the Executive. These can be found in the Manual of Faith and Order chapter 14 and also here in the Standing Orders of the Executive Commission.

4. ORDERING OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

- 4.1 The Assembly Business Convener shall send to each Assembly Committee Convener and to the Clerk of each Presbytery, two months before the meeting, a copy of the Preliminary Draft Agenda for the meeting of the Executive Commission. This agenda will indicate the day, session and order in which it is proposed that the report be heard, discussed and decided upon and also the proposed time allocation.
- 4.2 The Convener of each Assembly Committee shall
 - a. send one copy of the completed report to the Clerk of Assembly and another copy to the Cluster co-ordinator under which his/her committee falls under, to reach them not later than three months before the meeting;
 - b. send a video/voice note presentation to reach the Clerk of Assembly by 1 June 2024; and
 - c. submit to the Assembly Business Convener, to reach her no later than one month before the meeting, written or telephonic motivation

for

- changing the place of a report on the agenda; and
- changing the time allocated to discussion or decision making on the report in the Assembly;

REMEMBER

It is not competent for a Convener to put into the proposal of his/her committee a request to the Executive Commission to make funds available. He/she should deal with this according to paragraph 13.33 of the Manual of Faith and Order.

4.3 The Clerk of Assembly shall, on receipt of each report,

- a. review each proposal to ensure that its meaning is clearly expressed and that it is in proper form before sending the papers out to commissioners; and
- b. consult with the Convener concerned when an alteration to a proposal or other formal document needs to be made to ensure that the meaning is clear and that it is rewritten in proper form before sending out the papers;

Overtures and Petitions

4.4. Clerks of Presbyteries shall submit to the Clerk of Assembly, by not later than three months before the meeting (see 14.25 of Manual of Faith and Order), one copy of all Overtures and Petitions together with any related documents that have been transmitted to Presbyteries from Sessions and from individual members and other communications to be submitted to the EXCO. In the case of Overtures, a short report may be included if desired. These copies are to be forwarded as follows:

- a. one to the Clerk of Assembly.
- b. one to the Assembly Business Convener.

4.5. No Overtures or Petitions shall be considered unless the relevant provisions of the Manual have been complied with (including time frames).

Reports

4.6. The report submitted after the prescribed date will NOT be included in the Executive Papers or in Supplementary Papers. Instead, the Clerk will report the matter to the Executive Council and the decision to listen to the report will be taken by EXCO. Should EXCO resolve to listen to the late report; the Clerk of Assembly shall circulate an electronic copy to ALL commissioners.

4.7. No report will be considered as Supplementary unless provisions of the Supplementary report have been complied with, i.e. an initial report has been submitted at an appropriate time and between the time of submission and 14 days between the Council meeting there have been some developments within the work of the Committee that warrant reporting to the Council. The report of the Assembly Business Committee is

exempted from this rule

- 4.8. The Clerk of Assembly is empowered to examine Overtures as they are received. The Clerk then recommends to the Assembly Business Committee on how Overtures and Petitions are to be dealt with. When there is consensus between the Clerk and the Assembly Business Committee Convener, the Clerk makes a recommendation to the Executive Commission in his report

Applications from Presbyteries for ministers to retire and to be granted status of minister emeritus

- 4.9. A copy of the Presbytery Minute supporting an application for a minister to retire and to be granted the status of minister emeritus must be sent to the Ministry Committee of the General Assembly and to the Clerk of Assembly three months before the meeting. The Presbytery shall be responsible for sending the tribute of a minister who has applied to retire.

Returns to Remits

- 4.10. The Clerks of Presbyteries shall submit two copies of Returns to Remits to the Clerk of Assembly by the date set for the submission of the reports, in this case, the 30th of April 2024.

Assembly Papers and Yearbook

- 4.11. The Clerk of Assembly shall have all the foregoing documents compiled electronically, prefaced by a **Content Index**, the **Preliminary Draft Agenda**, these **Standing Orders**, the **In Memoriam Minutes**, the **Roll of Commissioners** (*in line with POPIA*), and the **Changes in the Ministry**. These shall be known as **"THE PAPERS FOR EXECUTIVE COMMISSION"**. The supplementary reports, proceedings and an Extract of Executive Commission decisions will be published electronically in the UPCSA Year Book.

- 4.12. The Central Office shall:

1. Distribute to all commissioners to the Executive Commission and to all conveners of General Assembly Committees who are not commissioners;

- a. the *Papers* in time for them to be read before it meets; and
- b. the minimum possible number of *Supplementary Papers* to commissioners immediately before it meets and to conveners who are not commissioners as soon as is practically possible.

2. Place the *Papers*, the *Supplementary Papers*, and the final version of the *Proceedings*, the *Decisions* and the *Remits* on the website, each as soon as possible.

3. As soon as possible after the Executive Commission, distribute to all commissioners, Presbytery Clerks and all conveners of General Assembly Committees who were not commissioners, copies of

- a. all the *Decisions* of the Executive Commission; and
- b. all the *Remits* adopted by the Executive Commission, separately compiled and identified.

4. Within two months after the Executive Commission, distribute to all conveners of General Assembly Committees, Presbytery Clerks and to all Sessions a copy each of the annual *Yearbook*, which shall contain;

- a. all the *Papers* and *Supplementary Papers*;
- b. all the *Decisions* of the Executive Commission (of which only one complete copy is necessary, with the decisions affecting [a] Minister, Sessions, and Congregations and [b] Presbyteries marked in different ways); and
- c. all the *Remits* adopted by the Executive Commission, separately sectioned and identified.

5. Send virtual copies of the *Yearbook* and the *Proceedings* to all archival repositories.

4.2 The Records Committee

We have not been able to come up with a workable approach on records examination as we are meeting virtually AGREED

5. THE ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE'S ROLE

5.1. The Assembly Business Committee shall,

- a. in consultation with the Conveners of Committees, arrange the order in which the business of Executive Commission is to be taken and in particular arrange with the Clerk of Assembly to have the Preliminary Draft Agenda circulated with the Papers;
- b. consult with the Moderator and Clerk to decide how communications addressed to the Executive Commission through them are to be dealt with;
- c. make arrangements for the distribution of documents; projection of presentations and proposals, handling requests for leave of absence; appointment of a "Drafting Committee"; Elections Committee, scrutineers; vote of thanks; appointing of press officer; plans for next Council; translation of speeches; and the nomination and election of the Records Committee;
- d. report at the beginning of the meeting of Executive Commission regarding business arrangements and personnel to be appointed to facilitate the meeting of Executive Commission, and be prepared to meet thereafter as and when required to guide the Executive Commission in its business;

- e. arrange for the meeting of "Insaka" groups during Executive Commission and advise commissioners on the appropriate words for proposals as well as the appropriate place on the Agenda of Executive Commission where the suggested proposal can be dealt with;
- f. do all it can to encourage the Executive Commission to communicate effectively, use its time well and expedite its business in such a manner as may be well pleasing to the Lord; and
- g. appoint a Drafting Committee consisting of up to 3 members who will read the reports of each of the Insaka Groups and prepare, in consultation with those groups, a set of proposals for the Executive Commission's Decision Session. The members of this committee must not be commissioners.

REGULATING OF DEBATE IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

- 5.2. The Moderator chairs the meeting of the Executive Commission, seated at a table set up at the front of the Council. The Moderator is assisted by the Clerk (seated to the Moderator's left) and the Assembly Business Convener (seated to the Moderator's right). The General Secretary shall also be seated at the "Front Table". The Minute Clerk/s are seated at a table to the left of or behind the Clerk.

Duties of the Clerk

- 5.3. The chief responsibility of the Clerk, during the meeting of the Executive Commission is to see that the minutes are properly kept. The Clerk is assisted in this by one or two Minute Clerks appointed by the Executive Commission, at the recommendation of the Assembly Business Committee. The Clerk of Assembly supervises the process and makes sure that the Minute Clerk/s have all the documents they need to keep the minutes accurately.
- 5.4. The Clerk advises the Moderator on procedure, whether this relates to the rules of debate or to the laws of the Church.
- 5.5. The Clerk moves proposals with regard to overtures, remits and reports.

Duties of the Assembly Business Convener

- 5.6. The Business Convener supervises all the "officers" appointed by Council to perform tasks except the Minute Clerks who are supervised by the Clerk.
- 5.7. The Business Convener advises the Moderator on when notices of motion, overtures and all business not listed on the agenda should be dealt with.
- 5.8. The Business Convener advises the Moderator or the mover of a proposal as to whether the motion is competent in terms of the provisions of the *Manual of Faith and Order*.

- 5.9. The Business Convener advises the Moderator with regard to the time available for Executive Commission to transact its business and may use proposals contained in paragraph 14.10 of the *Manual of Faith and Order* to help Executive Commission to handle its business more expeditiously.
- 5.10. Although the Clerk is responsible for advising the Moderator on procedure, the Business Convener may also do so.

6. WHAT HAPPENS FIRST AT EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

Roll of Commissioners

- 6.1. The Clerk of Assembly shall advise the Council of each apology and substitution. The Clerk shall report on any allegation of an irregular commissioner. After the decision of the Assembly on these reports has been taken, the Clerk shall move that the Roll of Executive Commission commissioners be adopted.

Changes in the Ministry

- 6.2. The Clerk shall move the adoption of the report on Changes in the Ministry as contained in the Papers. When the Council has satisfied itself as to the accuracy of the changes reported since the previous Assembly, it shall agree to adopt the report.

Report of the Assembly Business Committee:

- 6.3. The Assembly Business Convener shall report on, and move for the Council's approval
- a. The Final Draft Agenda;
 - b. Her Committee's nominations; and
 - c. Standing Orders.

7. WHAT SORT OF RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS IS REQUIRED AT EXECUTIVE COMMISSION?

- 7.1. The minutes of the Executive Commission shall contain a brief narrative, where appropriate, on the conduct within any Session of the meeting and record of its decisions.
- 7.2. Where the Executive Commission decides by consensus against a particular proposal, or where Executive Commission chooses to "pass from the subject", or where proposals are referred elsewhere, the manner in which the Executive Commission disposed of the proposals shall simply be noted alongside the number and subsequent proposals shall not be renumbered. The numbering of decisions of Executive Commission may be changed at any time by the Clerk of Assembly, so that the decisions follow in an understandable way.
- 7.3. Proposals introduced by the way of Supplementary Reports or Notices of Motion should be numbered in accordance with the above system.

- 7.4. The Decisions of Executive Commission shall be listed together as the "Decisions of Executive Commission", in appropriate order.

Confirmation of Minutes

- 7.5. The minutes of the Executive Commission shall be recorded during the course of the meeting. All except those of the last three sessions shall be circulated electronically during meeting, but none shall be presented to the Executive Commission for confirmation. The completed minutes will be distributed to all Commissioners within 30 days of the end of the meeting of Executive Commission and shall be confirmed within 60 days of the same date.

8. HOW DOES EXECUTIVE COMMISSION MAKE DECISIONS?

The Role of Standing Committees

- 8.1. Executive Commission receives reports from Assembly's Standing Committees. These reports contain proposals for decisions that Executive Commission is being requested to make. These proposals constitute the beginning of the decision-making process. Requests for action can also come in the form of Overtures and Petitions from Presbyteries or Sessions. Without these proposals, the process of decision making may never begin.

The Listening Session

- 8.2. The Convener of a Committee (or in their absence their nominee, or the Clerk of Assembly) is offered an opportunity by the Council to present their report in the Listening phase of the Council's meeting. This presentation may take the form of a speech, a video, a computer presentation or display. The aim is to showcase the committee's work for the sake of celebrating what the Lord of the Church is doing in the midst of His Church. The proposals are not moved at this point, but their substance forms part of the presentation.

In the case of an Overture or Petition, the person/s appointed by the relevant Council is/are invited to present the proposal.

After the report is presented:

- 8.2.1 The Clerk moves that the Council receives the report.
8.2.2. The Moderator allows for questions for the purpose of finding clarity.
8.2.3. The Clerk moves which proposals are "T" and "M" (also allows change from "T" to "M" without any debate but the "M" CANNOT be changed to "T".)
8.2.4. The Clerk then moves all T proposals as linked proposals for adoption.
8.2.5. The Moderator informs Council that "M" proposals are to be dealt with in Insakas

The Discussion Session (including Insaka Groups)

- 8.3. Any report, having been presented to the Council during the listening stage, is sent by Executive Council to Insaka Groups. Before the meeting of

Executive Commission, the Clerk shall, in consultation with the General Secretary, divide Commissioners into Insaka Groups of between 8 and 10 Commissioners in size and appoint a facilitator and a scribe for every group from among the Commissioners. An Insaka Group is a group which shall meet on the days of Executive Commission to discuss reports of Standing Committees, Overtures, Petitions, and such other business as the Executive Commission will instruct these to consider.

- 8.4. An Insaka Group will, at its first meeting, appoint for itself a scribe who will record the Group's decisions and possible amendments. The Clerk of Assembly will prepare a list of proposals for the Insaka Group's consideration. The Group will then discuss each proposal and record its consensus on each. Where the Group is not able to find consensus on a proposal, the reasons for this are stated in the Insaka Group's report. Where consensus can only be found after the proposal is amended, then the amendment is stated in the Group's report.
- 8.5. The Executive Commission may consider certain proposals, overtures or petitions which are regarded by the Moderator, Clerk, General Secretary and Business Convener as needing further discussion in a General Session. All commissioners are expected to attend these Sessions which are held in "open Council".
- 8.6. The Business Committee shall appoint, in consultation with the General Secretary, a Drafting Committee. The function of this committee shall be to study the reports from all the Insaka Groups as well as the content of General Session(s) and then draft a consolidated report and, possibly, a fresh set of proposals for the Decision Session.

The Decision Session

- 8.7. Only Missional proposals are dealt with at this level and these proposals shall normally be presented by the Clerk of Assembly with the Convener of the relevant Committee assisting if required. The Clerk of Assembly shall move each proposal in turn and the Council shall decide by consensus.
- 8.8. Committees to which matters have been especially referred during the Executive Commission shall deal with those references promptly and shall report as the Executive Commission may direct.
- 8.9. During a Decision Session,
 1. the Clerk of Assembly moves the proposal and then the Moderator calls for an indication of the Council's response. This is gauged through the display of indicator colours from individual gadgets, each Commissioner showing either the colour "orange" to indicate support for or "blue" to indicate lack of support for the proposal as moved.
 2. the Moderator considers the response of the Council to each proposal or group of linked proposals. If there is no disagreement, consensus is announced either by declaring that the proposal is carried or lost by

consensus. In each case, the Moderator declares the decision of the Council and this decision is recorded in the minute of the Council.

3. If the Moderator observes, from the display of the indicator cards, that there is no consensus on the matter, the Moderator calls commissioners to discuss the issue. Amendments may be moved in the course of the discussion with the Moderator being the judge of when consensus is achieved. A decision is reached when any one of the following occurs:
 - (a) all are in agreement (unanimity);
 - (b) most are in agreement and those who disagree are content that the discussion has been both full and fair and that the proposal expresses the general "mind of the meeting"; the minority therefore gives consent;
 - (c) it is agreed that consideration on the matter be postponed;
 - (d) it is agreed that no decision can be reached.

Indicator Colours

- 8.10. The Council may use indicator colours from individual gadgets for the purpose of communication between Commissioners and the Moderator. **Orange** colour may be used to indicate approval and **Blue** to indicate disapproval.

Formal Majority Procedure

- 8.11. If the Council believes that consensus cannot be reached then it may, by a two thirds majority, choose to use the formal majority procedures.
- 8.12. The Council may, if it votes by two thirds majority, choose to operate by formal majority procedure. This simply involves an indication of those in favour of a proposal and those against. After the votes are counted, the Moderator announces the Council's decision.

Notices of Motion

The use of Notices of Motion is discouraged. Any member of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa is free to communicate with the Clerk of Assembly or Convener of the relevant Assembly Committee regarding an issue that he/she would like the Executive Commission to take up. This may also be done with greater weight by means of an Overture or petition submitted by the member through the Session and/or Presbytery. The use of these procedures whenever possible would limit the necessity for bringing to Executive Commission by Notice of Motion any matter that has not been previously examined in a Session, Presbytery or Committee of Assembly.

- 8.13. A member of the Executive Commission desiring to bring up a matter not covered by a proposal of the appropriate Committee shall take the following steps:
 - a. He/she shall draft his/her notice on the Notice of Motion form;
 - b. He/she shall consult with the Convener of the relevant Committee or,

- if the matter falls under no particular Committee, with the Clerk of Assembly, as to the substance and urgency of his/her notice.
- c. He/she shall submit the drafted notice to that person for signature and an indication of the attitude of the Convener towards the proposal;
 - d. Notices of Motion to be presented at Executive Commission must be handed to the Clerk by morning tea (at the latest before lunch time) on the first day of Executive Commission. (NB this is the only opportunity where Notices of Motions will be received.)
 - e. Single original copy shall be presented at Executive Commission upon giving notice. The Notices Secretary will then attend to the distribution and circulating of the required document electronically.

Notices of Amendment

- 8.14. Notice of Amendment is not required in the Discernment Model of Decision Making. Commissioners are encouraged to make their amendments in their Insaka groups when it is their intention to move a **major** amendment to any proposal of an Assembly Committee. No opportunity will be provided for Notices of Amendment as in the Formal Majority procedures. The Moderator will allow amendments from the floor in the Decision Session only when this seems helpful to finding consensus on the matter.
- 8.15 Any question as to the competence of an amendment shall be decided by the Moderator.
- 8.16. The Drafting Committee has the right to bring a completely amended set of proposals to the Executive Commission each day after they have studied the reports of the Insaka groups and made every effort to reach consensus with those who have serious reservations about the issue under discussion.

Overtures

- 8.17. When an Overture is presented to the Executive Commission, the procedure then followed is that laid down in the *Manual of Faith and Order*, paragraph 14.18 – 14.26.

Time Limits

- 8.18. The timing of speeches is under the direct jurisdiction of the Moderator.
- 8.19. A Convener of an Assembly Committee presenting a report and moving its reception shall not address the Executive Commission thereon for more than the amount of time allocated in the final agenda.
- 8.20. A Convener moving the adoption of subsequent proposals of a Committee shall not speak thereto except when invited by the Moderator to do so.
- 8.21. Other speakers on a report, proposal or amendment shall not exceed five minutes each.
- 8.22. A member submitting an Overture or speaking to a motion, of which he has given notice, shall not exceed ten minutes.

- 8.23. Others speaking to an Overture or a motion of which notice has been given shall not exceed five minutes.
- 8.24. The mover of a proposal has five minutes to reply to the debate on his Motion when it is put as the substantive motion.
- 8.25. Once the Moderator has signalled the end of the speech, the speaker may be given extra time only if the Moderator has ascertained that the Executive Commission desires the speaker to continue.
- 8.26. The Assembly Business Committee Convener, in consultation with the Moderator and Clerk, may at any time during the Executive Commission move the proportional lengthening or shortening of these limits according to available time.
- 8.27. The Executive Council shall meet in three "postures", Listening, Discussing and Deciding. Each of these is separate and the Moderator will clearly announce the moving from one phase to another.
- 8.28. In the Listening phase, the Council will be afforded the opportunity of receiving presentations on the work of standing committees. There will be no debate or decision making during the Listening phase.
- 8.29. In the Discussion phase (Insaka Groups), opportunities will be offered for commissioners to discuss reports in groups, so as to search for consensus on each proposal. Amendments can be suggested. Each group will write a report for the Drafting committee who will then present a consolidated set of proposals to the Council for Decision.
- 8.30. The Business Committee may provide an opportunity for plenary discussion as well, but only pre-selected proposals will be discussed here.
- 8.31. A Decision Session will be held where proposals will be presented, discussed and consensus will be sought.
- 8.32. No Commissioner shall, during the course of the discussion, employ speech that is of an insulting, inflammatory or defamatory nature.
- 8.33. When several members wish to enter the discussion, they indicate their intention to the Moderator and then wait to be recognised by the Moderator. The Moderator, in any case, decides who shall have the floor at any time.
- 8.34. Any Commissioner to Executive Commission may make a **written request** to the Moderator for corporate or shared prayer on an issue confronting the Executive Commission. The decision to accede to any such request shall rest solely with the Moderator, who will determine the form of the prayers and who may lead them.
- 8.35. No Committee, except by leave of the Executive Commission, shall continue to sit after the Moderator has taken the chair.

- 8.36. The distribution of circulars and the making of announcements at Executive Commission must have the prior approval of the Clerk of Assembly and the Assembly Business Convener.
- 8.37. Whenever a physical count of votes is taken, the number of abstentions will be ascertained and recorded.

Press Release

- 8.38. The General Secretary shall be responsible for all Executive Commission's releases to the Press.

CLERK OF ASSEMBLY

Report to Executive Commission 2024

1. Introduction

After the 2023 General Assembly resolved to hold the Executive Commission from the 23rd to the 27th of June 2024, it meant that preparations had to start immediately after that General Assembly. Firstly, by making sure that all the decisions were sent without delay to Presbyteries, GA Committees, and other structures of the Church to allow them to start with the process of implementing these and to allow them to plan their work for the year ahead. Indeed, this allowed everyone to start working as early as possible. Lines of communication remained open all the time.

2. Reports

The situation regarding the submission of reports has not improved with many of the reports only being received well after the due date. All reports are to be submitted by the due date as contained in the Standing Orders or approved by the Executive Commission or General Assembly.

Also, the supplementary Reports are defined as any report submitted in addition to a report that has already been submitted. Currently, some Conveners would argue for submitting their reports late and call them Supplementary. This cannot be allowed.

3. Presbytery Administrative Meetings

General Assembly has ruled that Presbytery February meetings should deal with the administrative matters of Presbyteries. Most Presbyteries still struggle with this and as a result, it becomes difficult to get the administrative reports from Presbyteries in due time for the Executive Commission or General Assembly sittings.

We would also like to ask Presbyteries to help with the handover processes from outgoing to incoming Presbytery Committees, especially between the Presbytery Clerks. More often, incoming Clerks will have no idea of what the previous Clerk was doing, and that delays the entire progress in the Presbytery and affects the relationship between the Presbytery and the Central Office.

4. Consultation of Presbytery Officials

These consultations have proved to be very worthwhile, and more Presbyteries have been empowered through these. We would like to encourage those few Presbyteries who have not been regular in attending these to do so for their benefit.

Proposal:

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY REPORT TO EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

Amathole Presbytery

The following changes took place between the 2023 General Assembly and February 2024.

1. Ms Bamanye Vokwana, having completed the requirements of the General Assembly's Ministry Committee for probation, was appointed to serve her probation in the pastoral charge of Adelaide Township congregation from 1 September 2023 and was licensed as a probationer on 22 October 2023.
2. The Rev Celani Mbhele, having received an appointment to the congregation of Burnshill and having been released from Trans-Xhariep Presbytery, was set apart to his appointment on 2 July 2023.
3. The Rev Allan Nyoni having received an appointment to the congregation of Stuart Memorial was set apart to his appointment on 3 March 2024.
4. The Rev Sibakhulu Orsmond Loni passed away on 25 July 2023.
5. The Rev Mlamli Agrippa Mhaga passed away on 24 October 2023.

Central Cape Presbytery

	Minister/Probationer	Status of the Minister	From	To	Date
1	Rev A Sontange	Called Minister	JJR Jolobe Memorial	JJR Jolobe Memorial	03 September 2023
2	Rev X Mashibini	Appointed Minister	St Barnabas Congregation	St Matthews Congregation	11 June 2023
3	Ms Thuleleni Zondo	Bio-vocational Probationer	D.M. Soga Memorial	Kabega Presbyterian Church	04 November 2023
4	Rev M Goba	Seconded Minister (SADF)	Trans-Xhariep Presbytery	Central Cape Presbytery	11 November 2023

Copperbelt Presbytery

1. The licensing service for Mr. Fishani Muwowo as a probationer took place on 11th February 2024 at Bwacha congregation within the bounds of Zone three. The Homily was given by the Rev. Jane Nyirongo, and in attendance was the Synod Moderator, the Rev. Sauros Phaika.
2. The severance service for the Rev. Amos Nyirenda took place on 25th February 2024 at Chimwemwe congregation within the bounds of Zone One in Kitwe.

Drakensberg Presbytery

1. The Rev Dr Sibusiso Lindani was transferred to the care and discipline of the Presbytery of East Griqualand on November 11th, 2023.
2. Mr Themba D Nzama was ordained and appointed to Midlands Congregation on January 21st, 2024. The Interim Moderator of Midlands the Rev IM Mabaso was released with thanks from Midlands Congregation.

East Griqualand Presbytery

1. CALLS

The Revd. Nelson M Manabile having received a call to the Congregation of St. Peters within the Highveld Presbytery, was released from the Pastoral charge of Mpharane Congregation as of the 30th of August 2022.

2. INDUCTIONS

2.1. The Revd Caroline N Hlati, having resigned a call/ charge with the Paballong Congregation within the bounds of the East Griqualand Presbytery, was inducted into a Shared Ministry between the Paballong and the Springside Congregations on the 20th of August 2023 at a joint Service at Springside Presbyterian Church.

2.2 The Revd. Pitso Moletsane, having been granted a transfer to the Care and

Discipline of the East Griqualand Presbytery, was granted a seat on the 03rd of December 2022. He was thereafter appointed for a 3-year term - period at the Mpharane Congregation and was inducted on the 03rd of September 2023 at the Congregation.

3. DEATHS

The late Revd. Mathemba Victor Tati, having been granted a transfer to the Care and Discipline of the East Griqualand Presbytery by the EThekwini Presbytery, was granted a seat at the Presbytery in the November 2023 Statutory Meeting. Sad news is that he passed on, in a motor vehicle accident on the 14th of March 2024 and he was laid to rest on the 21st of March 2024 at his home in Mvumelwano Village in Qumbu (May his soul rest in peace).

4. TRANSFERS

The Revd. Dr. S. Lindani, having been granted a transfer to the Care and Discipline of the East Griqualand Presbytery by the Drakensberg Presbytery, was granted a seat at the East Griqualand Presbytery on the 03rd of February 2024.

eGoli Presbytery

1. Miss Amber-Leigh Gordon, having completed the requirements of the Assembly's Ministry Committee for probation, was appointed to serve her probation in the pastoral charge of Mount Faith Congregation from 1st January 2024 and was licensed as a Probationer on 21st January 2024.
2. Having received a three-year part-time appointment to the Alexandra Congregation, the Rev Fezeka Jobela was inducted on the 16th July 2023.
3. Having received a three-year part-time appointment to the Diepkloof Zone 3 Congregation, the Rev Sandisele Xhinti was inducted on the 13th August 2023.
4. Having received a three-year part-time appointment to the Kagiso Congregation, the Rev Lesego Mokeng was inducted on the 3rd of September 2023.
5. Having received an appointment at SAPS, Rev Khanyiswa Minya resigned from the pastoral charge of Orlando Congregation on the 04th of June 2023. She later moved to SANDF and was transferred to the care and guide of Limpopo Presbytery on 01st March 2024.

eThekwini Presbytery

1. Elder Kevin Bestwick was appointed to serve at Greyville Presbyterian Church on the 01 August 2023 as Stated Supply for 1 year.
2. Rev C. Lotz having received a call at Richards Bay Presbyterian Church was inducted to the care and discipline of Thekwini Presbytery as from the 01st of December 2024.
3. Mr L. Hardouin having completed his probation was ordained and inducted to serve at Westville Presbyterian Church on 28th January 2024 for a period of 3 years and welcomed into the Thekwini Presbytery as from the 01st January 2024.
4. Rev S. Gwala having received an appointment at Claremont Presbyterian Church was inducted to the care and discipline of the Thekwini Presbytery from 01 March 2024.
5. Rev M Hlela resigned from the appointment at St Paul's Presbyterian Church as from 29 February 2024.
6. Rev C. Subroyan term in a shared Ministry between St Margaret's Presbyterian Church and Merebank came to an end 29 February 2024. He has been appointed at St Margaret's from 01 March 2024 for a period of 3 years.
7. Rev J. Ezekiel was appointed as Stated supply at Merebank Presbyterian Church from 01 March 2024 for 1 year.
8. Rev Sandile Dlamini having been welcomed and admitted to the UPCSA and Thekwini Presbytery on 19 August 2024.
11. Rev. Mathemba Tati was released from his appointment at Khayelihle Presbyterian Church on 31 October 2023 and transferred to East Griqualand Presbytery's care on 01 November 2024. Sadly he passed away on 14th March 2024.

Highveld Presbytery

1. The Rev Wayne van Heerden having received a call to the congregation of Gateway Kempton Park Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and having been released from the pastoral charge within the bounds of the Presbytery of Tshwane was inducted on 2 July 2023.
2. The Rev Stewart Gordon has been appointed to a shared ministry of Heidelberg and St Andrew's Germiston effective 1 January 2024.
3. The Rev David D Monokoane has been released from the Lekoa Presbytery and on 17 February 2024 he was given a seat in the Highveld Presbytery without charge.

Lekoa Presbytery

1. Reverend Robert Thema (Moderator of the Presbytery)
2. Reverend Xolelwa Kobese (Clerk of the Presbytery)
3. Elder Dan Mosounyane (Recording Clerk)
4. Elder Sabata Khetsi - Presbytery Treasurer
5. Elder Tefo Khunong - Finance Convener /Stewardship
6. Reverend DD Monokoane moved to Highveld Presbytery
7. Reverend TE Sello Mohlmonyane was ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacraments. Was appointed in pastoral charge of the St Paul congregation.

Limpopo Presbytery

1. The Rev Lethabo Mabotja was ordained and appointed to the charge of Stuartville Congregation on the 25th of February 2024.

M'chinga Presbytery

1. The Presbytery released Rev James Lungu from Matero Congregation on 25th June 2023 and inducted him to the Charge of Kaunda Square Congregation on 9th July 2023.
2. The Rev Masauso Nyirenda was received from Copperbelt Presbytery on 10th February 2024 and was inducted to the charge of Chelstone Congregation on 10th March 2024.

Mthatha Presbytery

1. The Rev. Ndimpiwe Qupuna, having been appointed to the Pastoral Charge of D.V Sikhutshwa Memorial, was inducted to this pastoral charge on the 11th of February 2024, for Three Years.

Munali Presbytery

1. As a Presbytery we received **one Minister** on transfer from Copperbelt Presbytery and was inducted on 4th July 2023 at St. Marks Congregation in Siavonga.
2. Rev. Arthur Bowa is now a Minister without charge.
3. Rev. Allan Mchulu is a Minister without charge.

Thukela Presbytery

1. Rev S Mncwabe was transferred to the care and discipline of the Drakensberg Presbytery.

Trans Xhariep Presbytery

1. **Rev C.U Mbhele: Transferred** to the care and discipline of Amathole Presbytery. The Presbytery severed the pastoral ties between the Rev C.U Mbhele and Ikageng Congregation on the 30th June 2023. Seconded and **AGREED**.
2. **Rev C.M.M Letseleha: Appointed** and Inducted to the pastoral charge of the Ramoeti Masemola Memorial United Congregation, within the bounds of the Trans-Xhariep Presbytery, on the 13th August 2023. Appointment is for duration of three years (1 June 2023 – 31 May 2026). Seconded and **AGREED**.
3. **The Rev M. Goba: Transferred** to the care and discipline of Central Cape Presbytery. Presbytery released the Rev Goba as from the 12th August 2023, as a seconded Minister at SANDF (Chaplain). Seconded and **AGREED**.

4. **Rev B. Ngebulana: Transferred** from the Presbytery of Western Cape to the care and discipline of the Trans-Xhariep Presbytery as from 12th August 2023. Presbytery grants the Rev B. Ngebulana a seat in the Presbytery council as a seconded minister at SAPS (Chaplain). Seconded and **AGREED**.
5. **Rev T.G Galela-Thema: Appointed** and inducted to the Pastoral Charge of St. Andrew's Constantia in Kroonstad within the bounds of the Trans-Xhariep Presbytery, on the 12th February 2024. The appointment is for a period of 5 years (1 January 2024 – 31st December 2028). Seconded and **AGREED**.
6. **Prob. Mr T.P Mkandwini:** Has successfully completed his probation and PAT. Presbytery in its sitting on the 11th February 2024 accepted the request to ordain and appoint Mr Mkandwini to the Pastoral Charge of the St. Andrew's Vergenoeg in Kimberly for a period of two years. Presbytery set aside a date of 21 April 2024 to **Ordain and Induct Mr T.P Mkandwini**. Seconded and **AGREED**

Tshwane Presbytery

1. Rev. Graham Fryer was released from St. Marks and was inducted on a call to Trinity, Lynnwood Presbyterian Church on Sunday 3 March 2024.
2. Rev. Frikkie Botha was released from Premier Mine and was inducted on 10 March 2024 to Centurion West on an appointment as a part-time minister.

Western Cape Presbytery

1. The Rev B Asch, having received a call to the congregation of Mowbray Presbyterian, and having been released from the pastoral charges of St Stephen's and St Ninian's, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Egoli, was inducted on 21 May 2023.
2. Ms NP Tshibika, having completed the requirements of the Assembly's Ministry Committee for probation, was appointed to serve her probation in the pastoral charge of Stellenbosch United from 1 April 2023 and was licensed as a Probationer on 4 June 2023.
3. The Rev B Ngebulana, minister without charge, was transferred into the care of the Trans Xhariep Presbytery from 1st June 2023 to take up an appointment as an SAPS Chaplain.
4. The Rev D Muller, minister emeritus died on 23 July 2023.
5. The Rev S Mpafi, being transferred as a SANDF Chaplain, was received by transfer from the Tshwane Presbytery from 1st August 2023
6. Mr PB Ndzakayi, having completed the requirements of the Assembly's Ministry Committee for probation, was appointed to serve his probation in the pastoral charge of Retreat Presbyterian from 1 September 2023 and was licensed as a Probationer on 17 September 2023.
7. The Rev R Calder, being granted permission to retire at the 2022 Executive Commission, was released from the pastoral charge of Pinelands Presbyterian / United Church from 31st October 2023, and given a seat in the Presbytery of the Western Cape.
8. The Rev M Craig, having received a call to the congregation of St Paul's United, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Limpopo, was released by the UCCSA Peninsula Regional Council from the pastoral charge of Claremont Congregational Church as of 31 December 2023 and then the Presbytery of the Western Cape transferred him into the care of the Presbytery of Limpopo from 1 January 2024.
9. The Rev M Jones, minister emeritus died on 27th February 2024.

Zimbabwe Presbytery

1. Probationer

- 1.1 Ms Tariro Eva Mupfururi, having completed the requirements of the Assembly's Ministry Committee for probation, was licenced to serve her probation for two years in Mufakose Congregation, Harare from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025 and was licenced as a Probationer on Saturday 27 January 2024.

2. Ordinations

- 2.1 The Rev Caesar Murove, was ordained and appointed to the congregation of Dzivaresekwa Presbyterian Church, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was ordained on Saturday 13 January 2024.
- 2.2 The Rev Lilian Chirikwawo, was ordained and inducted to be a colleague minister to the congregation of Mbare Presbyterian Church, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was ordained on Saturday 13 January 2024.
- 2.3 The Rev Lazarus Sajeni, was ordained and appointed to the congregation of Mhangura Presbyterian Church, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was ordained on Saturday 20 January 2024.
- 2.4 The Rev Fiona Margaret Benzon, was ordained and appointed to the congregation of Lekkarwater and Lowlands, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was ordained on Saturday 3 February 2024.

3. Call

- 3.1 The Rev Pedzisayi Noah Chataika having received a call to the congregation of Highfield Presbyterian Church, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was released from the pastoral charge of Kambuzuma congregation as from 31 December 2023. Was inducted on Saturday 27 January 2024.

4. Appointments

- 4.1 The Rev Pascal Sibanda, having received an appointment to the congregation of Highlands Presbyterian Church was released from being the Chaplain at David Livingstone Memorial School, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was appointed on Saturday 23 September 2023.
- 4.2 The Rev Stanslous Chatikobo, having received an appointment to the congregation of Kambuzuma Presbyterian Church, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was appointed on Saturday 27 January 2024.
- 4.3 The Rev Norest Ajapa, having received an appointment to the congregation of Mabvuku Presbyterian Church was released from the pastoral charge of Sunnyside congregation, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was appointed on Saturday 3 February 2024.
- 4.4 The Rev Gleness Magovere, having received an appointment to be a Chaplain at Gloag Schools, and having been released from the pastoral charge of Robert Sinyoka congregation and Chaplain to Robert Sinyoka Primary School, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was appointed on Saturday 10 February 2024.
- 4.5 The Rev Anna Banda, having received an appointment to a shared ministry between Khayelitsha congregation and to be a Chaplain at Robert Sinyoka Primary School, and having been released from the pastoral charge of Mhangura Congregation as from 31 December 2024, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was appointed on Saturday 10 February 2024.
- 4.6 The Rev Biggie Mususa, having received an appointment to be a Chaplain at David Livingstone Memorial School, and having been released from the pastoral charge of Budiriro Congregation as from 31 December 2024, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was appointed on Saturday 10 February 2024.
- 4.7 The Rev Matorofa Mutonganavo, having received an appointment to be a colleague minister to the congregation of Masvingo Presbyterian Church was released from being a Chaplain at Gloag High School as from 31 December 2023, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, will be appointed on Saturday 27 April 2024.
- 4.8 The Rev Dr Garikai Mufanebadza, having received an appointment to be a colleague minister to the congregation of Masvingo Presbyterian Church, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, will be appointed on Saturday 27 April 2024.

5. Secondment

The Rev Dr Knowledge Zinduru, having received a Secondment with the Church of Scotland, was released with effect from 22 March 2024.

6. Minister without a Charge

Rev Cleto Munaro and Rev Simbarashe Agushito

APPLICATIONS TO RETIRE REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

APPLICATIONS TO RETIRE

1. eGoli- Rev Tieho Philip Letsheleha

The Presbytery of eGoli at its seating on 17 February 2024, approved an application for retirement from Rev Tieho Phillip Letsheleha. His application is to retire on the 30th of September 2024.

Rev Tieho P Letsheleha: Tribute on Retirement

The Rev Tieho Phillip Letsheleha was born on the 30th September 1956 in Benoni. In 1980, he matriculated at Mabuya High School in Daveyton.

In 1981, he was called to the Ministry of the then Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (PCSA). In 1981-1983 he studied for Ministry at Federal Theological Seminary in Pietermaritzburg and obtained a Diploma in Theology.

In 1984, he started his Ministry at Orlando Presbyterian church in Soweto. He was licensed to preach the gospel on the 9th September 1984 and ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacraments on the 25th August 1985. He served the Orlando Presbyterian church from 1984-2009. In August 1990-1992, He was afforded an opportunity to further his Theological Studies in the United States of America at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, where he obtained a Master of Theological Studies degree.

Tieho Letsheleha is married to Eleanor Letsheleha and they are blessed with two beautiful daughters, Tlaleng and Mponeng.

He served both at the Presbytery and General Assembly levels. At Presbytery (Egoli), he served in the following areas/capacities. As Interim Moderator, he served the following two congregations, namely Meadowlands Presbyterian Church on three occasions: 1996-1999, 2001-2002, and October 2020- February 2024. St Patrick's Presbyterian Church on two occasions; 2009-2014. January 2020- January 2021. He served as a Convenor of Church Growth for two terms: 1993-1996, and 1998-2001. In 2002-2004, he served as a Moderator of the Presbytery and acted in that capacity from March 2006 to June 2006. 2005-2007, he served as a Convenor of Mission and Evangelism of the Presbytery. He also served as a Convenor of the Partnership Committee of the Presbytery.

He served at the General Assembly in the following manner: Vice-President of Black Leaders Consultation from 1985-1988, Convenor of an Ad-Hoc Committee on Ancestral Veneration, 1994-1996, Convenor of Justice and Social Responsibility, 1996-1999. He also served as a Convenor of the Presbyterian Educational Fund (PEF), a sub-committee under the Christian Education Committee, and a member of various Committees of the General Assembly, e g Ecumenical Relations Committee.

Currently, Rev Tieho Letsheleha is serving as Minister of Moletsane Presbyterian Church within the bounds of Egoli Presbytery. He has been serving this congregation since 2010 until now (2024). He has served the Denomination for forty years. Glory be to God Almighty forever and ever.

eThekwini – Revs Niek Wit and Zephney Kennedy

2. Rev Niek Wit

132/23.1.13 Presbytery grants leave of absence and extends the Rev Niek Wit Ministry Credentials (Agreed by consensus)

143/23 Omission: retirement of Rev Niek Wit.

Rev Niek Wit: Tribute on Retirement

Niek was born in The Netherlands and immigrated with his family to South Africa in 1966. They were active in Presbyterian Churches in Pretoria and Randburg.

In 1979, Niek joined 'Youth with a Mission' and remained with this mission organisation until 1992. During this time he met his wife, Heidi. They married in 1982 and had four children, Janell, Nathan, Ryan and in 2001 adopted Slindile.

Niek joined the Westville Presbyterian Church in 1992 as a Pastoral Assistant and commenced his studies for a Bth with UNISA. After successful completion he also completed a Post Graduate diploma in Functional Therapy.

Niek worked alongside the Rev. Kingley Dale at Westville Presbyterian Church until 1996 when Rev Dale accepted a call to St Mungos in Johannesburg. Although Niek was still studying he took on the ministerial responsibility at Westville under the guidance of the Rev. Dr. James Elias. After his years of probation he was ordained in 1999 and inducted as the minister at Westville Presbyterian Church where he remained until the end of 2022 when he and Heidi relocated to Ireland.

His tenure at Westville was a rich journey serving God's people. With an emphasis of empowering members for ministry, a commitment to Biblical literacy and missions, provided an environment for growth and maturity.

He will remain thankful for the opportunities he had to serve God in this capacity and for the loving generous support he and Heidi were given.

3. Rev Zephney Kennedy

21/24.1.11 Presbytery accepts the retirement of Rev Z Kennedy. Agreed by consensus.

Rev Zephney L Kennedy: Tribute on Retirement

Zephney was born in 1957 in Cape Town. She was Christened on the 23 February 1958 by the Rev Edwin Pons and confirmed on the 27 October 1974 by the Rev James Clark at Gardens Presbyterian Church, Cape Town.

Zephney attended the University of Cape Town from 1976 to 1979 attaining a Bachelor of Arts in African languages – Xhosa, History and English. She taught High School students mainly in the Western Cape between 1980 and 2008.

Zephney was ordained as an Elder in St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cape Town in 1995. Married Paul Smith from Kent, England in 2006 and started her studies in theology through UNISA in 2010, graduating in 2012. On 16 August 2011 she was admitted to the order of Lay Preachers, Western Cape Presbytery. During 2013 and 2014 Zephney served as a

Probationer under the Rev Natalie Gordon at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Cape Town, and the Rev Mzwamadoda Mfene at Langa Presbyterian Church.

Zephney was ordained into the charge at Richards Bay in 2015, having answered the call to ordained ministry after her first calling, to high school teaching. It was a varied and fulfilling ministry in a different environment from the Western Cape; the people and the place are Still very dear to her.

More than a year after her husband had to leave South Africa, owing to difficulties with the Dept of Home Affairs, she joined him in a little village – 2 churches, one pub, no shops – in Norfolk, England. The vicar of the Anglican group of churches welcomed her and was willing for Zephney to continue in two areas that she likes: a Bible Discussion Group and a Julian Meeting for silent Christian prayer. The Bible Discussion Group meets over tea and biscuits in the 300-year-old village pub while the Julian Meeting meets in the village church that is more than 850 years old – what a blessing.

Zephney enjoys an ongoing ministry of word and sacrament in the Methodist Church UK and the United Reformed Church in which she is included on the preaching plans.

Over the past years, since leaving South Africa, Zephney has appreciated being connected to Thekwini Presbytery by zoom, and being able to participate in the meetings of the Worship Committee as well. The UPCSA is precious to her and her prayer is that its members will continue to model Jesus in ministry and mission.

She indulges her interest in history by visiting places of interest in the UK, walking her dog – named after a Norfolk Martyred Rebel with a Good Cause – and travelling a little.

4. Trans Xhariep : The Rev Dr TPE Tondi

(Extracted from the minutes of the Trans-Xhariep Presbytery)

Inter alia...**TXP 23/48.1.5**

Presbytery received the request for early retirement from active ministry from the Rev.Dr T.P.E Tondi. Presbytery verified and confirmed that the Rev. Dr T.P.E Tondi meets the requirements for early retirement. Presbytery approved the request and instructs the Clerk to notify in writing the UPCSA Chief Financial Officer, The Rev T. Nopapaza and the pension fund of the denomination. Seconded and **AGREED**.

Rev Dr Tsoabisi Pakiso E Tondi: Tribute on Retirement



Was born on 17th December 1962 and brought up in Sharpeville, in the famous Vaal Triangle. The family has always been Presbyterians and as an infant was baptised by the late RSM Maja at St Paul's Sharpeville. Married to Mokidi Tondi (nee Dikobe) who is also from a Presbyterian family and the two have been blessed with two (2) daughters, Nonkululeko and Tawonga. Matriculated at Central Senior State School in Soshanguve. Was called into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in 1984 under the ministry of the Rev Prof Maake Masango. After the PCSA got a special permission for him, he went to study at the then University of Durban-Westville, which under the apartheid system was meant for Indian students only, and obtained his B Th in 1989.

He was appointed to the Ga-Rankuwa Congregation and served his 2 years' Probation from 1989 – 1991 and was subsequently ordained in 1991 in his home congregation. For the next 10 years (1992 – 2004) he served St Andrew's-Khotsong congregation in Bothaville. Served in various committees of the then Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Have also represented the Church in number of ecumenical bodies, nationally and internationally. In 1993 he attended Council World Mission Youth Conference that was held in Soul, South Korea. Once served as Moderator of the then Orange-Vaal Presbytery, which is now the Trans-Xhariep Presbytery. Between 1999 and 2002 worked as a Junior Lecturer at the then University of the North-Qwaqwa Campus, teaching Cultural Studies, and in 2021 he obtained an M.A (Moral and Cultural Studies) from the same University. Between 2000 and 2001 he served as the President of the Presbyterian Black Leadership Consultation (PBLC) – an organisation that in the then PCSA was instrumental in the empowerment of Black leadership within the church and encouraged Black congregations to be financially sustainable.

Between 2002 and 2009, while continuing to serve the Church he went on and worked as Assistant Director: Student Recruitment at the Central University of Technology (Bloemfontein Campus, as Senior Manager: Outreach and International Liaison for Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), later as Manager: Office of Head of Department (HoD) of the Free State Department of Social Development respectively. On 01 April 2009 he rejoined the Central University of Technology as Deputy Registrar: Student Services at the Central University of Technology, Free State until 31 December 2020), and it is during this time that he pursued his studies and in 2005 he obtained his PhD (Religion and Culture) from the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN), and in 2016 obtained an M.A (Higher Education Studies) from the university of the Free State (UFS). He has been an Interim-Moderator of St Andrew's-Kroonstad for almost six years, and done his best to save this congregation that like others within the denomination are located in town or suburbs and are struggling to grow and thus are faced with extinction.

On 01 June 2022 he joined the UPCSA General Assembly Office staff as Ministry Secretary until 28 February 2023. He will always be grateful to God Almighty and the denomination for the opportunity he had to serve the Church and also be able to deeply reflect on the meaning of the call to Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Was from the 01 March 2023 appointed as Director: Student Services and Development and God willing this will be until his final retirement at 65. He believes that his ministry is serving the nation in providing support to students within the higher education setting and in the main contributing in instilling spirit of collaborative and ethical leadership in them.

Research interest continues to be on issues related to religion and culture, African politics, management, and governance within the higher education setting. Has just published a book titled: *Conversation with Thangana: Essays in Honour of Reverend Gladwin "Rassie" Phenya*.

5. Highveld Presbytery : Rev SP Lediga

There is one application received to retire from the Highveld Presbytery.

The applicant is **Reverend SP Lediga**.

At the Highveld Presbytery Meeting held on 20 May 2023, an application letter requesting retirement as at 31 July 2024, was considered and approved. Kindly find an extract(68/23)

"A further correspondence has been received from Rev Phofedi Lediga, indicating that he is retiring on 31 July 2024 the Clerk of Presbytery read:

"This letter is my official notification to the Highveld Presbytery that my tenure in full-time ministry as per the legislation to the UPCSA comes to an end on the 31 July 2024. I am excited about my impending retirement but wanted to take this opportunity to thank the UPCSA and the Highveld Presbytery for all the opportunities I have experienced. In conclusion, I am reminded of Paul's farewell words to the Ephesian

elders in Acts 20:13-38, I have served the Lord with great humility, God have certainly been gracious to my wife and I to serve Him in this part of His vineyard, in Christ and with much love."

Presbytery notes and accepted the letter and instructed that the necessary measures be taken in line with the procedures and inform the Central Office where applicable".

Rev Phofedi Elias Caleb Lediga: Tribute on Retirement

Reverend Phofedi Elias Caleb Lediga is the second son of Rev Raphatla and Mathoto Lediga born on the 07th of July 1958 in Vlakfontein, Mamelodi (Pretoria). He got married to Tshepiso Lediga (Nee Kosie) on 04 May 1990 and were blessed with two boys Mpho, Masebole and a girl Mathoto. Reverend Lediga is blessed with four grandchildren, three girls and a boy. His eldest brother Masebole passed away and he is left with his younger brothers Rathabeng, and Ntubane and three younger sisters Matshidiso, Mamakiri and Sekati.

He attended his primary education from Sub A & B to Standard 3 (Three) in Khayakhulu Primary School Khayakhulu (Rustenburg). Reverend Lediga's father was transferred to Bleskop Mines where he continued with his primary education from Standard 4 to 6 in Photsaneng Primary school.

He did his higher education from 1978 to 1982 in Limpopo Province (Pietersburg) from Form One to Form Five in Phiri-Kolobe High School at Ga-Maphoto village.

After completing his matric he did not have enough money to further his studies, in 1983 he went to Carletonville and work as a clerk in Doornfontein mine till 1985. During his stay in Carletonville, he was attending church services in the Presbyterian church under Rev. Leslie Dawson, he then received and responded to a call to the Ministry.

(A) MINISTRY EDUCATION

1986-1988, Diploma in Theology (Federal Theological Seminary) in Imbali, Pietermaritzburg.

2004-2005, B.A. Honors in Theology (University of Pretoria).

2012-2014, M.A. in Theology (University of Pretoria).

2019-2024, PhD. in Theology hoping to graduate in September 2024 (University of Pretoria).

(B) MINISTRY WORK

In 1989 he started his Probation at Jonas Lediga Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa Atteridgeville (Pretoria), under the supervision of the Rev. R.S. Kgopong then in 1990 he was taken to St. Peter's Presbyterian Church Mothotlung (Brits) still under the supervision of Rev. Kgopong.

In 1991 January 19th he was ordained by the Rev. Michael Moore, Moderator of Transvaal East Presbytery in St. Peter's Presbyterian Church Mothotlung. In the same year on the 18th of August, he received and accepted the call from St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Phiritona (Heilbron) under the Free State Presbytery. Reverend Lediga served as the Convener of Presbytery Youth Fellowship for two years and a member of Ministry committee. He also served at St. Silas and St. Timothy Presbyterian churches in Sebokeng as their interim moderator, he stayed in Phiritona for four years.

In 1995 he received a call from Thembaletu Presbyterian Church (George) under Presbytery Port Elizabeth. He served in the Children Ministry Committee of the Presbytery, and served in that congregation for four years.

In 1999 July 01st he received a call from Trinity Uniting Presbyterian church in Southern Africa Katlehong (Germiston) under the Presbytery of Highveld. He served the Presbytery as the Youth Convener from 2001 to 2003 and the Convener of the Presbyterian Educational fund for two years. In this Presbytery he served as an interim moderator at

the following congregations: Kwa Thema Presbyterian church, St. Luke's Presbyterian church and St. Peter's Presbyterian church from 2004 to 2006.

In 2007 January he was appointed in St. Peter's UPCSA Duduza Nigel under the Highveld Presbytery and still serving to date. He served as the member of the ministry committee from 2008 to 2010, and a member of the Associations Committee. He also served as a member of the Sunday School Committee. He also served as the Convener of the Presbytery Church Choirs. He is currently serving again as an interim moderator in the following congregations: Tsakane UPCSA (Tsakane,) D.T. Plaatjie (KwaThema) and St. David's UPCSA (Nigel), He is still serving these congregation until his retirement from an active ministry of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa on the 31st July 2024.

(C) MINISTRY WORK IN THE DENOMINATION

He served as a member of the Ecumenical Relation Committee under the leadership of Prof. Jerry Pillay and a member of the Presbyterian Church Educational Fund under the leadership of Rev. T.P. Letsheleha.

We thank the Lord for the life and ministry of Reverend Lediga, it is indeed a life of unequalled sacrifice and fervent servanthood.

6. East Griqualand Presbytery: Rev JM Gugushe

The East Griqualand Presbytery, having received Rev. J.M Gugushe's Application for Retirement, discussed the matter and unanimously agreed to forward it to the Executive Commission in order to grant him the status of Emeritus as per his request. Here attached is his one-page Tribute that was presented at the Presbytery Statutory Meeting on 9 March 2024 at Gillespie Presbyterian Church.

Rev Joseph M Gugushe: Tribute on Retirement

TRIBUTE (as presented at the EG Presbytery Statutory Meeting of the 09 March 2024):

Rev Joseph Mongezi Gugushe was born at Mpharane A/A in the Matatiele District on 29 September 1957. It was during his young age when he joined SCM (Student Christian Movement) and descent his call of ministry but ignored the calling until he was working. At that moment, he enrolled with the Joint Board, registered with Bransby Key College for a Diploma in Theology, and graduated in 2007.

In 2009, the Selection Committee of the UPCSA selected him. In 2010, he proceeded to the University of Pretoria, obtained his Honors degree in Theology, and started at Clermont Congregation in EThekweni Presbytery as a probationer in 2011. He was then transferred to Groutville St Johns Congregation. They were worshipping in a preschool until a Korean Missionary blessed them by financing St John Congregation for building a Church Hall for worshipping. On its completion, the probationary period just elapsed and as no congregation was ready for a minister, he was transferred to Mthatha Presbytery.

He was ordained in the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in 2013 and as he continued with his theological studies obtained MA in Theology in 2014. He was then appointed to two small congregations in Ngqeleni and Port St Johns in order to develop them.

He was then transferred to East Griqualand Presbytery and was appointed to a shared ministry in Stirling Memorial and TT Dekeda Memorial Congregations in 2016. In 2017, he was appointed as a President of MCG (now Fellowship of Men), for two conservative terms until 2022. In 2019, the appointment lapsed and only Stirling Memorial Congregation was the one who renewed the appointment. Despite such financial constraints, COVID-19, they managed to build a new Church Hall as a congregation under his leadership. It was then that in 2022, the time came for him to retire, but the Session of Stirling Memorial Congregation wanted to keep him for another five years and the Presbytery approved his retirement extension.

It was this year, 2024 when he with the Stirling Memorial Congregation Session decided to release him from serving the Congregation from having to be involved in debt because of financial constraints.

IN MEMORIAM MINUTES TO EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

THE REV. SIBAKHULU ORSMOND LONI :IN MEMORIAM

A life well-lived

Early Life

Born on the 1st of June 1957 at Tyhusha Location near King William's Town, Sibakhulu Orsmund Loni was the fourth and last born of Malangeni Bartholomew and Dinah Nombuyiselo Nofikile Loni. His siblings – in their chronological order are: Mandisa Olivia, Nanziwe Otellia (late), and Mkhokheli Osborne.

Sibakhulu quickly grew accustomed to misfortune, as he was not brought up by his parents; his mother was a domestic worker in King William's Town and his father was a migrant worker between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha); whilst his siblings were away from home as well. He stayed with neighbours and only went home at the end of each month when his mother was around. He then stayed with his sister – Mandisa, following her return from Nursing School. Had it not been for those years with Mandisa, Sibakhulu would have dropped out of school in Standard Two (Grade 4).

Sibakhulu did his primary education at Tyhusha Primary School under the watchful eye of Mrs Mafanya. He passed Standard Three (Grade 5) with exceptional marks – such that he was exempted from enrolling for Standard Four (Grade 6) and was placed in the Standard Five (Grade 7) class. He then proceeded to Amantinde Secondary School for his Junior Certificate (Form 1 to Form 3) and later proceeded to Nathaniel Pamla High School in Peddie for his Senior Certificate (Form 4 and Form 5).

Call to Ministry

Throughout his life, a soft voice calling him into Ministry unwittingly pestered him. By the age of 11 he was already responsible for ringing the church bell, opening and locking up the church, welcoming congregants at the door, as well as other duties that normally accrue to a Deacon at his local Bantu Presbyterian Church in Tyhusha. It is through this work that he was quickly introduced to the liturgy of the Presbyterian Church. This was more enhanced by his registration as a full participating member of the Student Christian Movement during his Secondary Education years – a role which further blossomed at Nathaniel Pamla High School during the Sunday Morning and Evening services at the School Hostel.

In 1976 he registered for a Three-Year Diploma in Theology at the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM) in Pietermaritzburg, which he completed in 1978. He was then placed at Columba Mission Congregation in Centane within the then Presbytery of Transkei (now Tiyo Soga Presbytery) from 1979 to 1984. Together with Columba leadership he was able to take Columba from a membership of 900 in 1979 to 1300 in 1984; and from a 27 outstation congregation to a 33 outstation congregation.

In August 1984 he received a Call from the Zwelitsha Congregation in King William's Town (Semple Memorial Mission) – a congregation he served for close to 30 years. It is during his induction that he was given a salutation (isikhahlelo) of "Aah! Dalivuso!" which was invoked by the role that he played within the congregation. Focused efforts in collaboration with Semple leadership saw the congregation's growth in membership from 144 members in 1984 to a total of 1500 in 2014; and from a bank balance of forty-four Rand (R44-00) in 1984, to reserves well over nine hundred thousand Rand (R900 000-00) in 2014. During his tenure, the Semple Church Building was extended in two phases to include the Hall; the building of the Manse adjacent to the Church; as well as the Church buildings at Rhayi Village, Ndevana Village, Ndakana and Ginsberg. All this was possible with a focused Session and a body known as the Planning Committee.

In 1999 following the union of the RPCSA and PCSA into the UPCSA, he was appointed as the first Deputy General Secretary of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, a position that was later replaced by Clerk of Assembly as a result of restructuring.

In August 2018 he was appointed as Minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in King William's Town, where he served until his last day. Together with St Andrew's Leadership the Church grew from a membership of 15 practicing members to over 500 by 2020, and a bank balance of three hundred Rand (R300-00) in 2018 to one hundred and eighty thousand Rand (R180 000) in 2020.

In-between these periods he was the Interim Moderator of many congregations and his motto has been to stay for a short time as Interim Moderator and introduce a Minister. Examples of this were seen in the Macfarlan, eMgwali, Dr Ntsikelelo Katiya Memorial and Auld Memorial Congregations.

Sibakhulu served on a number of Committees both at Presbytery and General Assembly level. These include: Clerk of Presbytery (Transkei Presbytery), Clerk of Presbytery for both the then Ciskei Presbytery and Amathole Presbytery, Convenor of Amathole Presbytery Court and Presbytery Administrative Review Panel, Convenor of Amathole Mission and Discipleship Committee, Convenor of Ministry Committee of the former RPCSA, Convenor of UPCSA General Assembly Business Committee, as well as Moderator of RPCSA General Assembly in 1995 (which is the highest office within the Presbyterian Church).

Siba the Mentor

After completing his Diploma in Education whilst at Columba Mission, he enrolled at UNISA and later transferred to the University of Fort Hare where he completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree (passing his Biblical Studies Major with Distinction); Bachelor of Arts Honours (in Biblical Studies); Higher Diploma in Education as well as Bachelor of Theology Honours (with Distinction) from the University of Pretoria.

As an avid educationist, he began his journey with the Education sector on the 1st of January 1991 as a Biblical Studies and Philosophy of Religion lecturer at the former Griffiths Mxenge College of Education in Zwelitsha. Due to the rationalisation and subsequent closure of Colleges of Education, he then joined the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education's Curriculum Division and was charged with the responsibility of introducing the Continuous Assessment Programme across the Province.

He later transferred to Professional Development as a Senior Education Specialist, where he spearheaded a programme ensuring that all students from former Colleges of Education complete their studies towards becoming qualified Educators. Many of these destitute College students were able to register and complete their outstanding courses within eight weeks with dedicated lecturers from the former UNITRA and they graduated. Within the Department, he also managed a project that saw to the employment of 980 unemployed youth across the Province as Learner Support Agents – some whom have since graduated and placed in various work streams such as Social Work.

His last appointment within the Department was at the HIV/Aids and Social Planning Directorate where he served as Chief Education Specialist for Social Planning. It is in this role that he worked tirelessly until his retirement in June 2022.

Keeping up with the Lonis

Sibakhulu married Zolisa (Zoe) Qavane and in their marriage they were blessed with Bathandwa (who married peter Cengimbo), Siyasanga "Tototo" (who married Nomzamo Ndaba), Athi-Enkosi (who married Sibusiso Nkohla) and Kholosa - the last born (Daddy's Girl)

He further leaves behind his grandchildren with whom he shared a very special bond: Bukho, Thando, Akho, YamaKhuze, Nakhane, Zande and Libanzi.

To a man who lived each day to the fullest and touched many lives, we say Go well, ye faithful servant. Phumla ngoxolo Dlamini, Sibakhulu, Khuze, Tiba, Ntlangwini, Sotshenge, Magaduzela. May you rest in peace and rise in glory. You will be dearly missed and forever remembered.

THE REV MLAMLI AGGRIPPA MHAGA : IN MEMORIAM

The late Rev. Mlamli Agrippa Mhaga was the first grandson of Bhasi James and Alice (MaJali) Mhaga who was born of Savita. He was born on the 13th September 1945 in Tywaka village within the District of Willowvale. He is the son of Ntuthuzelo Benson Mhaga and Mazibula (born Mbokothwane). He was raised by his grandparents. After the passing of all the family elders he moved to Duff Mission in Idutywa where he stayed with his paternal aunt, Mrs Bomela who played the role of a "mother" to him.

He received his early education at Duff Mission School until he passed Standard 6 with flying colours. He could not study further due to circumstances and he therefore herded sheep. When herding his flock he would always read newspapers and books as a result of his intelligence. His humility, respect and dignity resulted in him being called by his clan name "Dlamini" which most people ended up thinking was his name. He had a sharp eye when it came to herding sheep and would quickly notice a lost sheep which he would look for and ultimately find.

One day while herding sheep there was a strong wind which led to a piece of paper being blown in his direction. He picked it up and read it and that was the beginning of his spiritual journey as that was a pamphlet from an Evangelical Bible school in Centane under Mr J Oosthuizen as principal. He made an application to the school and was successful. It was at the Bible school where Mlamli explored his calling. He passed many of his courses with flying colours.

In 1979 he returned to Duff Mission where he contributed enormously in the Spiritual development of the congregation as a trained evangelist. This was the time when the congregation was without a Minister for some time and his involvement in the Life and

Work of the congregation made things manageable for the Interim Moderator, the late Rev JL Sokupa, who visited the congregation once a quarter.

In 1980 he enrolled as a Theological student at the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM) in Pietermaritzburg. He completed a Diploma in Theology in 1982 and was ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Dutywa.

His first appointment was at Burnshill congregation in Middledrift in 1983. He remained at Burnshill until 1985. From 1986 he served as a minister of Mgwali congregation within the Stutterheim District. He found the Mgwali Community "*bleeding*" spiritually in 1985 and it was quite a challenge to minister to this community at the time.

Minute 5815 of November 1983 Executive Commission of the RPCSA records as follows: "*Rev GT Mcoteli reported on their visit to Mgwali for the purpose of expressing solidarity with the people of Mgwali who are under threat of (forced) removal to Frankfort in Ciskei.*" Minute 5966 (3) of 1985 RPCSA General Assembly further records as follows: "*Note with gratitude the determination and skilful manner in which people of Mgwali are fighting against the forced removals*"

Against this background the General Assembly of 1985 appointed Rev Mlamli Agrippa Mhaga at Mgwali and he found the community in 1986 more like a no-go-zone; as members of the community were now sharply divided on the issue of removals; and a brother was killing a brother and a sister killing a sister; with properties of people being torched with petrol bombs; forcing 1700 families to leave Mgwali for Frankfort.

It was through his prophetic ministry and his evangelistic skills that moulded the small remnant of Mgwali that was leaking wounds and he managed to bring peace among families and relatives through the sermons he delivered to almost every activity at Mgwali. He met Nomfundo Goba and they got married in 1991. She was named "Nobom" by the Mhaga family symbolising that after all the hardships Mlamli had gone through, he had finally found life through MamTshawe. They were blessed with their only son Siyakudumisa Mlungiseleli.

In all his life, Agrippa distinguished himself as a "man of prayer." He would pray at an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgery where he went to collect his hearing aid and the doctor would instruct the nursing assistants not to bill Agrippa. In visiting your household he would pray for you and your family at your house; mentioning your children by names; and he would never mention his own burdens; but he would concentrate in asking blessings for other people. He excelled in caring for the aged at Mgwali; taking home communion to every home-bound member of Mgwali every quarter. He spent close to 30 years at Mgwali until his retirement in 2014.

He read widely and he would engage in high Theological debates but at the end he would come back to the basics i.e. recognising Christ as his Lord and Saviour. He loved history and IsiXhosa as a language. In 1985 he was asked by the then Ciskei Presbytery to translate a Statement of Faith document from General Assembly into IsiXhosa. His IsiXhosa translation was even more complex than the English version where he invented words like "*unkwintshana*" etc. He is known by the Amathole Presbytery Fellowship of Men whenever they meet that he would be the one to pass vote of thanks to the hosting congregation after service; and the congregation would enjoy his pure IsiXhosa mixed with his sense of humour.

Rev Mhaga passed away on 24 October 2024 after a long illness. He is survived by his wife Nobom, son Siya, grandson Iyana and a number of sisters and brothers. Rest in Peace Dlamini, Zizi, Jama, Fakade, Sandlulube, Ngxob' inoboya, Mshibha, Mabetshe.

THE REV FUMANEKILE ELLIOT NQWENI: IN MEMORIAM 1937-2024

The Rev. Elliot Fumanekile Nqweni was born of Nicholas Mateyise and Nobanzi Grace Nqweni in Gobe, Centane, on the 23rd September 1937. He completed his primary education at Gobe Primary School and his matric at Newell High School, Port Elizabeth.

He worked in the following institutions:

- Natal Building Society as a Filing Clerk
- Department of Home Affairs
- Enkuselweni Place of Safety as an Assistant Superintendent
- Jose Pearson Santa Centre as a Welfare Officer

In between various roles in employment and ministry he obtained his certificate as a Lay Preacher under the then Port Elizabeth Presbytery. His theological studies were completed in 1992 at the Theological Education by Extension College in Johannesburg and was ordained in 1995. He married his wife Mamtolo in 1962.

He served in the following congregations:

- In 1960 he became a Deacon at St Barnabas Presbyterian Church in Port Elizabeth.
- Between June 1981 and April 1989, he served as Stated Supply at NU3 Mdantsane Presbyterian Church.
- April to October 1989 – Langa Presbyterian Church
- 1993-1997 – Ordained as Minister of Word and Sacraments by the Port Elizabeth Presbytery in 1995.
- 1998 – St Paul's Presbyterian Church in KwaMashu, Durban
- During his twilight years of his retirement he served as an Interim Moderator at St John's Uniting Presbyterian Church in Keiskamahoek.

REV. HOSIAH TROOM NKOANA

In Memoriam Minute: The Rev. Hosiah Troom Nkoana

The Rev. Hosiah Troom Nkoana passed on, 12 December 2024 and was buried on 21 December 2024, at Phuthaditjhaba, Qwaqwa within the bounds of the Trans-Xhariep Presbytery.

IN MEMORIAM MINUTE FOR REV HOSIAH TROOM NKOANA

INTRODUCTION

He was born on the 27th of September 1960 in Hamanskraal and died on the 12th of December 2023 in Qwaqwa in the Eastern part of the Free State Presbytery. He got married on 14 December 1985 to his wife Mrs Thembi Nkoane from the Madonsela family. They were blessed with three daughters. His wife and eldest daughter gave a moving tribute referring to his love, care, and support for them and the extended family during his lifetime.

He was employed on a full-time basis by the University of the Free State as manager of student affairs. He excelled in this responsibility and retired about two years ago. During his time at the Free State University, he also upgraded and got his degree in Public Administration.

ST ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KIMBERLY

He served one of the congregations in Zimbabwe for a few years before accepting a call to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in the then Orange Vaal Presbytery in the Northern Cape. Rev Hosiah Nkoana not only grew up being made aware of the injustice of apartheid by his parents, but also how not to become bound by that which he opposed. As a result during his time in the Northern Cape, he was very much involved in the Ministers Fraternity

and was appointed to serve on the executive committee due to his love and passion for correcting the socio-economic and social ills of the past which were the direct result of the state machinery of an inhumane system of apartheid. He spiritually touched many lives in this congregation and has set an example of a Spirit-Filled Christian, a leader in God's Church who was a servant to his fellow Christians right to the end. He served the wider community with distinction. This contribution was always appreciated by the general public and further endeared him to many ordinary people in that community. He served this congregation faithfully for several years before accepting a call to Ramoeti Masemola Memorial Church formally known as Witsieshoek United Church.

ZIMBABWE

The Rev Hosiah Nkoana was one of the few ministers who went beyond the borders of South Africa and went on to Minister in our Sister African Country Zimbabwe. He impacted positively to lives of the Presbyterians in Zimbabwe. The congregations he served sent a heartfelt message that was read at his funeral service, and this was the evidence that Hosiah was indeed the servant of God and he would go anywhere God called him to serve and Minister.

RAMOETI MASEMOLA MEMORIAL CHURCH.

He served this Witsieshoek United Church faithfully for almost all the years of his ministry. A further interest outside of the congregation and presbytery was with the South African Council of Churches (SACC) where he did exceedingly well as the project manager in poverty alleviation and self-help projects geared towards empowering poor communities in that region. He did this kind of work with great joy and passion as it was his usual way to be directly involved in practical ministry. He had a great sense of order and structure in the worship of the church services he served. The church services he conducted were marked by thorough preparation, a formal dignity, and a sense of consistent submission, praise, and worship to God. The time he spent at Witsieshoek United charge was a period of great numerical, financial for the church and personal and spiritual growth for members. During these years he played an active role in various local ecumenical bodies and served on many social structures in Qwaqwa. His vivid sermon illustrations and ability to stimulate his listeners in their search for truth will always be remembered. He had an admirable spiritual side and a great sense of humour. Resigning from his position as minister of Ramoeti Masemola Memorial Church, he took full employment at the University of Free State where he was employed on a full-time basis as a Manager of Student affairs.

TRANS XHARIEP PRESBYTERY

The workings of God's Spirit in Rev Hosiah Nkoana did not allow him to remain content with the current state of Presbytery. Furthermore, his intellectual perspective together with his capacity for hard work did not take long to make its distinctive mark. He purposefully served as convener of the Administrative Review Panel at the Presbytery level and commissions of inquiry. He wanted to push the Presbytery's performance to the next high level by serving on its executive committee and as convener of various committees. His areas of interest in the Presbytery were conflict management and resolutions, worship, and church development and planning. Throughout his ministry, he established healthy relationships with his Presbytery colleagues and as a result, he earned respect from them.

It is of great importance to emphasize the fact that the Rev Hosiah Nkoana was involved in the life, work, and witness of Trans-Xhariep Presbytery:

- Served as the Interim Moderator to Harrismith & Warden preaching stations in the eastern Free State Province,
- Served as the Interim Moderator as well to Phoolong Presbyterian Church in Kroonstad in the Northern Free State.
- He also served as the Interim Moderator of Frankfort-Villiers Presbyterian Church in the north-eastern region of the Free State Presbytery.

FUNERAL SERVICE

He died suddenly at the age of **62** having served the church with faithfulness and dedication. His funeral service was conducted as a presbytery service in Ramoeti Masemola Memorial church on Thursday 21st December 2024. The Presbytery Moderator, the Rev Mashiane Letsheleha presided over the funeral programme while the Rev Malose Thema delivered a tribute on behalf of Trans Xariep Presbytery. The Immediate Past Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt. Revd Sipho Mthethwa delivered the sermon, and when all was said and done, Prof Dr. Rev Maake Masango conducted the burial service in Bluegumbusch in Qwaqwa amongst the people he served for many years. Although Trans-Xhariep Presbytery has lost a servant leader, it does not contemplate the future with confusion, for Rev Hosiah Nkoana has left it with a clear sense of purpose, responsibility, and direction.

CONCLUSION

With Rev Hosiah Nkoana's passing, the people of the eastern Free State Province and Trans-Xhariep Presbytery have lost a true friend and spiritual mentor. He will be sadly missed by all who have known him and worked with him. His death is deeply mourned by his wife, daughters, and family to whom we extend our deepest sympathy. We thank God for his life and his service in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Assembly offers its hearty thanks for his fruitful life. At last, the Rev Hosiah Nkoana has heard his Lord say, 'Well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy and presence of your Lord'.

THE REV ZOLA MATUTU: INMEMORIAM

The Rev Zola Matutu passed away on 29 June 2023 at the age of 50, after a short illness. He was a minister at St Peter's -Mothutlung Congregation in Tshwane Presbytery and a former Clerk of Presbytery from 2019-2021.

Zola was born on the 10th October 1972 in Queenstown. He was the son of the late Solomon Nkunkuse Matutu, from the Mbathane clan and Nomzi Matutu from the Shweme clan. He was the eldest of 3 children with two sisters, Vuyiseka and Phindiwe. He is survived by his mother, sisters, brothers, children (Phumelela, Yolisa, Avuyile, Qhayiya and Relebogile), nieces and nephews and grandchild.

He started his education at Kwasirayeli Junior Primary School under the Principal Mr Sixaba and proceeded to Nonesi Senior Primary School under the Principal Mr Hokwana. He did his high school education at Nkwanca High School under the Principals Mr Takane and Tyatyeka. His thirst for education led him to the following institutions:

- Zwelethemba Technical College in Zwelitsha where he studied upholstery in 1996.
- He could not escape his calling which led him to start his theological studies at the University of Fort Hare in 2001 and completed them at the University of Pretoria in 2003.
- He completed his Honours in Theology at the University of Pretoria.

In the year 2000 he worked in Cofimvaba at Metro Cash and Carry. He also worked at the Department of Education as an educator and would help as an invigilator at the end of the year; because of his skills he moved to the Department of Health as a Marketing Director at Nicole Nursing College.

From 2004 – 2008 he served in different congregations in Polokwane. He then moved to Pretoria Central where he served for a period of five years. Jesus says to His disciples as He was about to leave this world: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations," and He further says, "ningaphumi apha ningambathasiswanga" Mbathane did that, joyfully sharing the Word of God as he served at Mamelodi and Rustenburg Congregations.

After being without a charge for seven years, he did not lose hope as he had an agreement with his Lord and he knew that for everything there is a season. In 2022, God's divine appointment took him to St Peter's Mothutlung Congregation in Tshwane Presbytery, unfortunately illness had come. He served the Congregation with patience and zeal; forming good relations that translated into adoration. As the days of men are numbered, Moruti Matutu was called to rest at the end of his race.

THE REV DOUGLAS GILBERT PHILLIP MULLER: IN MEMORIAM 2 JUNE 1936 TO 23 JULY 2023

(With acknowledgements to the Rev Rod Botsis and Mrs Avril Muller)

We cannot pay tribute to the Rev Douglas Muller, without also paying tribute to his wife Avril. We give thanks to God, for their combined contribution to God's Kingdom and to His Church was a whole.

*The passage in 2 Corinthians 5:14 -15 & 18-21 - 14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that **those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.** 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was **reconciling the world to himself in Christ**, not counting people's sins against them. **And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.** 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

There were three strong aspects of the Mullers' ministry: Reconciliation, Colleagueship and Networking.

Reconciliation

Avril writes as follows ... If you want to walk on water, you have to get out of the boat. Avril says, "I lived with a Water Walker." Douglas responded to God's call at 18 years of age and trained for the ministry at Rhodes University for 5 years. After his ordination Douglas started ministry in a small country Church. Soon he was visited by the Rev Ndlovo, the minister of the local Bantu Presbyterian Church. What was significant about the visit is the Rev Ndlovu did not come to his study door, or to the front door of the house, but he came to the back door. Here was a colleague, a fellow pastor in the Presbyterian Church using the back door. Welcome to Apartheid South Africa. This visit by the Rev Ndlovo helped to shape Douglas future ministry. Douglas invited the Rev Ndlovo to serve Communion in the small white Presbyterian country Church. Elders in the congregation struggled with this, but Douglas passion for Reconciliation prevailed. In each congregation that Douglas served in, he formed groups for Reconciliation.

In 1985 Douglas resigned from the pastoral ministry to form a justice and reconciliation organisation called the Christian Leadership Trust. He became its national co-ordinator, fulltime for a 5year period and received no fixed salary but simply trusted in God's faithfulness and the support of other Christians who liked him and who wanted to see a reconciled change and a peaceful transition to full democracy in South Africa.

Douglas was beginning to feel confident in his water walking and he began to work outside the borders of South Africa. He organised a group from the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa to meet with representatives of the ANC and PAC in Zimbabwe. In making these arrangements for this visit he was informed by a senior ANC official that the differences and mistrust between the two groups, ANC and PAC, was so deep that it would be impossible for them to meet together. However, God had something else in mind. When arriving in Harare, only the PAC representatives were there, and there was not enough transport to get everyone in the delegation from the airport to their hotel. While walking in the parking area, the ANC representatives arrived, and so the ANC and PAC worked together to get the Presbyterians to their hotel. They were beginning to get the message that a way forward had to be found for everyone through Reconciliation and working together.

Rod Botsis writes ... Whatever public statements were made by the then Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA) about the need for Reconciliation in South Africa;

Douglas was one of the Doers. **HE practiced what WE preached.** Mostly, never, drawing attention to himself he just got on with building bridges within the denomination and across the divides in South Africa. That work of reconciliation was mostly secret and confidential. It was in these hidden years of the Kingdom that the miracles of Grace happened, and various Reconciliations took place! Compelled by Christ's love and taking to heart the ministry of Reconciliation which Paul says Christ has committed to us, the Mullers wanted to and worked to bring others in their congregations under the love and mercy of Christ. They did this because they so profoundly knew Christ is Lord of all and in His compelling love, Jesus sent them as His Ambassadors to work at Reconciliation wherever divisions reigned and especially in the political, social, and ecclesiastical South Africa of that time.

In speaking of reconciliation, for Douglas it was not only between people, but it was also bringing others to be reconciled to God. Many have paid tribute to Douglas leading them to the Lord. One such is Norman Gee who writes: "As an 'Atheist Know it All!!' I used to go to Douglas intending to rile him with questions I thought he could not answer. Not only did he answer them all, but he led me to the Lord. What a man of God"

Douglas had a vision of a flame beginning in Cape Town and spreading northwards over all the Continent to Egypt. A flame like an Olympic torch bringing Christ to all in reconciliation to Him and through Him to each other. It was this, primarily, that got him elected as Moderator of General Assembly in 1992.

We give thanks for Douglas and Avril's ministry of Reconciliation.

Colleagueships

The history of Collegiate Ministry at parish level is not always happy reading. But there have always been a few ministry couples who were excellent colleagues in a parish setting. The Mullers' ministry with the Crawfords at Mowbray and with the Dales at Pinetown / Westville remain as bright lights in our denomination. The Mullers knew the difficulties and the pitfalls in a collegiate ministry and could dance well without stepping on the toes of their colleagues.

Stemming from Douglas and Avril's love of Christ Jesus and the ministry of reconciliation both Douglas Crawford and Kingsley Dale could say that working with the Mullers was amongst their happiest years and their most productive for the Kingdom of God. Both Jessie and Kingsley Dale testify to "the joy, the value, the education, the satisfaction of being colleagues with Douglas and Avril Muller.

In an act of sheer grace of generosity Douglas and Avril "gave" to the Dales the Westville congregation of the joint charge 'Pinetown / Westville'. Having started the work in Westville and now seeing it becoming the stronger, the richer, the part with the greater potential the Mullers made this collegial sacrifice to a much younger and less experienced couple.

Douglas went on to establish works in Hillcrest and Richard's Bay and was involved with the Presbytery of Natal and Durban's work in "township" congregations and for a while under the Church Extension Committee of General Assembly, he was overseeing the PCSA's work in Zambia. We give thanks to the Muller's collegiate ministries.

Networking

Avril writes ... Political parties, inside and outside of South Africa may take credit for the change that came about in South Africa, but there is more to the story, as many within the Christian community helped to make sure that the change came through the ballot box and not through the bullet. The miracle of South Africa is that change did not take place through the bullet, because behind the political strife was the network of the Christian Church, which mostly operated within the laws of the country at that time.

Douglas role in this network of Christian Churches was a preparation to walk on water.

It was in the early 80's that Douglas met Archie Gumede, and a friendship developed between them, as unassuming and radical people they both worked for change from two completely different perspectives. Archie was a founder and co-president of the United Democratic Front an organisation set up in the 80's as a front for the banned ANC to work inside South Africa.

Archie opened up the underground to Douglas helping him to form alliances and to open up his own network of Christians across political and racial divides. Archie continued on one path, but Douglas walked a different path in a time when he got out of the boat.

At that time SA was on the brink of Civil war. Apartheid had run its course and change was on its way. But no one was certain as to how it would come about. The ANC and PAC were banned and could not operate freely, and tensions ran high, but it was not until the release of Nelson Mandela that the big changes took place.

The Anti-Apartheid movement organised a march in Cape Town in 1989 and wanted to also organise a peaceful march in Durban. There was concern that there may be violence, so a member of the Christian Leadership Trust asked Douglas to speak to Archie Gumede and the Anti-Apartheid movement to ensure that the march would be peaceful with no violence. The Christians network buzzed, and the march went ahead peacefully and without incident. This was a significant moment where protest was embracing co-operation. It was a success that became a step towards the process that led to a peaceful transition to full democracy in South Africa.

Rod writes ... Douglas was elected as Moderator of the PCSA General Assembly in 1992. He was then the only Moderator of General Assembly in our history who while still Moderator was nominated to continue for a 2nd term. Alas, in the final vote the Rev Rod Botsis was elected as Moderator.

The African Council of Churches planned the 2nd Pan African Christian Leadership Assembly (PACLA) a few weeks after the PCSA General Assembly in Nairobi Kenya. The Moderator, the Rev Rod Botsis was invited in his official capacity with the South African delegation. But the Rev Douglas Muller had also received an invitation in his own right and the Assembly made him part of the official group. When arriving in Nairobi it was evident that Douglas had a vast network and was well known and loved and enjoyed.

Douglas was invited to lead the devotions at the head office of the All-African Council of Churches one morning. He told them they should ask the PCSA Moderator, the Rev Rod Botsis. They replied that the invitation was for Douglas, but Douglas insisted that the new Moderator, the Rev Rod Botsis should lead the devotions, and so he did. But given the connections to and from Douglas to so many other leaders and to PACLA itself, it was an extraordinary act of selflessness and of honouring the one who had been voted in ahead of him in the UPCSA Moderatorial election.

As water can be so quiet but persistent to wear down rocks and mountains and to lift up roots of opposition and ugliness and alienation, so Douglas could with such quietness and courtesy and decency be, and bring, the water of grace in Reconciliation ... which is the ministry of Jesus; AND be the Reconciler in collegialship and networks ... Like Jesus establishing the 12 and leaving the work of the Kingdom to them.

In Matthew 5:9 we read Blessed are the peacemakers for heaven will shout out "they are the Sons of God".

We give thanks for the life and ministry and RESURRECTION of the Rev Douglas Gilbert Phillip Muller.

ELDER JAMESON ZOLA MAQEKENI: IN MEMORIAM
In Memorial Minutes of Elder Jameson Zola Maqekeni

Elder Jameson Zola Maqekeni, a devoted educator, community leader, and cherished family man, passed away in October 2023 in Eastern Cape.

Born in the Tshontini district in Mqanduli, Eastern Cape on June 9, 1952, to the late Mr. Sam Mthetho Maqekeni and Mrs. Jane Ndlela, Elder Maqekeni's educational journey began at Darabe Junior Secondary School. He continued his studies at Gengqe and Jalamba High School, eventually pursuing a teaching career at Butterworth Training College of Education. His commitment to lifelong learning led him to obtain qualifications in ACE (Advance Certificate in Education Management) and BEd in Education Management from Walter Sisulu University. At the time of his passing, he was diligently working towards his Master of Education in Management.

Elder Maqekeni's impact extended beyond the classroom as he served as principal at Mpakama Junior Secondary School, Ntshunge Junior Secondary School, and Gusi Junior Secondary School, retiring from Mbanyana Junior Secondary School. His dedication to education and leadership was also evident in his role as a commissioner and treasurer at the Mthatha Presbytery, as well as his commission to the General Assembly and Executive Commission of the Assembly.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Elder Jameson Zola Maqekeni leaves behind a legacy of love and family. He is survived by his beloved wife, four children, 10 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Elder Maqekeni will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to education, his profound impact on his community, and his deep love for his family. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

ELDER BRIAN DAVISON: IN MEMORIAM
11 OCTOBER 1946 TO 26 MAY 2023

(With acknowledgements to Rev R Steiner & Rev R Botsis)

Brian Davison was a nice person. As Presbyterians, Elders of a congregation are responsible for all areas of the congregation's life, and especially the spiritual areas. The Stewardship Board is made up of Stewards who manage the temporal affairs; the finances and the property, and they are answerable to the Elders.

Often there are disagreements between Elders and Stewards. Stewards try to manage the finances, while Elders try to spend the finances, often without checking with the Stewards if it right to do so, or if there is enough money to do so. Often the attitude is "God speaks to Elders; and Stewards must just find the money! So, a Church Treasurer is often unapproachable and seen as a controller, or even a mean person lacking the easy generosity of grace. At every level of Church government – Assembly, Regional, Local, it would be very uncommon to say of the Treasurer "that is a nice person." But it was easy to say that of Brian Davison!

Brian was always polite, thoughtful, generous of spirit, available to help and wanting to bless the Church. Philippians 4:5 asks to "let your gentleness be evident to all." It always seemed that Brian practised that. Paul asks that of us because, he says, "the Lord is near at hand, here amongst us." Again, Brian showed he was doing what he was doing because it was the Lord's work and so he did what he did in a God fearing and God honouring way. Watching Brian work and working with him on the Western Cape Presbytery Finance Committee, it was easy to hold him in high regard and to love him.

In Philippians 2:19ff, we read of Epaphroditus who was sent by the Philippians to Rome to find Paul and to give him the gifts and funds the Philippian believers had gathered together

for Paul. Often the question in the Church is "Who can we trust with our money?" Brian was such a person, one who showed great willingness to help and assist in the management of Finances. He was welcomed with great joy and held in honour as an honourable leader who was trustworthy and was a joy to be with. Brian became a very real blessing to the Presbytery as Administrator of their Finances, and he was also a very real blessing to those within the Rondebosch United Church where he served as Treasurer for many years. That was clear about Brian is his love for God's people brought us joy because he "refreshed the saints."

In 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 we read "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

The language of sowing describes and helps us understand a visible reality in the mystery of Jesus resurrection triumph over death and it gives the promise of our own resurrection. In the mystery of the dying and rising seed, Jesus showed the image of sowing to describe the secrets of the Kingdom of God and with this parable in mind, we honour Brian Davison as a Treasurer of precious seeds.

In Mark 4:26-29 Jesus said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain - first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

The Kingdom of God is like a Sower entrusted with the important currency of his day, precious seeds, set aside for a new harvest of love. The Sower was called Treasurer of precious seeds, as he knew the sacrifice of not grinding all the seeds for the dough of today, but to save some seeds for the bread of tomorrow.

Once a year the Treasurer of precious seeds gathered his community and gave them a budget to calculate the seeds required to make sure the new year would have a rich harvest. He did this to make sure his community would never run out of the dough needed to bake the kind of life-giving bread that would not only feed the body, but would also feed the heart, mind, and soul of his people. Some years were more difficult than others as it became difficult to meet the demands of the seeds needed and the Treasurer as keeper of the seed would encourage his brothers and sisters to trust God's generosity in their own lives. He had absolute faith not just in God, but also in his community and when the target of seeds was met at the end of a long year, he shared the good news with a childlike sense of awe and wonder.

The Treasurer of precious seeds led by example, volunteering his own skills and time freely and generously year after year. He was not a man of many words, but of big smiles. He was not the preacher type, but rather a man of action, a Sower of note, making sure that there was always enough dough in God's bakery. His reputation as a treasurer of precious seeds quickly spread throughout the land. Other bakeries approached him for help. And he freely and generously offered his support so that young and old, children and elderly across the land would always know that the kingdom of God is not just at hand, but already present in the yearly cycle of sowing and reaping, of baking and sharing.

And in his quiet and unassuming way, Brian as the Treasurer of precious seeds kept reminding those preaching the Good News that what was needed was not so much speaking cleverly about God, but rather making God real to people. Yes, people might not live by bread alone, but it is the bread shared around the table of those who would otherwise go hungry that allows the kingdom of God to be experienced in a very real and tangible way.

And in the spirit of this parable, so now, we begin to speak of accountants no longer as just accountants, but as Sowers, as Treasurers of precious seeds. Thank you, Brian.

Brian Davison's participation in managing the finances of Presbytery and its Administration, showed not a tightfistedness, controlling spirit, a "putting and keeping ministers in their place;" but, in fact, his ministry refreshed the saints. That is something so very much like God Himself.

Examples from Brian's work amongst us as the Treasurer of precious seeds are:

#The annual Christmas gift to retired Staff personnel, retired Ministers, Widows and Widowers.

#The annual meal for retired clergy, spouses, and widows growing to a meal for all clergy and partners.

#Funding transport costs for Ministers going to bi-annual UPCSA clergy conferences.

#Behind the scenes dealings with Cape Mental Health and the Khayelitsha United Congregation.

#Behind the scenes work in helping Eleanor Murray Residence and the Project for the Aged.

#Taking on the task of Treasurer for several congregations.

#Assisting with the sale of the Pinelands Church and the preservation of the funds received, and their provision for the ministry to continue

Brian's ability to hold and to keep confidential information about Ministers in trouble and troublesome Ministers was very real. His gentleness was the oil of grace and in many instances, MERCY in secret. All this was to God alone with no attention given to Brian Davison himself.

We give thanks to God for Brian Davison's life, work and ministry in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His Church. Brian refreshed us and made serving Jesus a joy, so we rejoice in the Resurrection of the dead and the Life Everlasting. As a Treasurer of precious seeds may his legacy live on in this Presbytery for many years to come.

ELDER CHRISTOPHER JOHN THOMPSON: IN MEMORIAM

10 JUNE 1939 TO 25 APRIL 2023

(Acknowledgement is given to the Rev Heindrich Asch in the compiling of this In Memoriam Minute)

Christopher John Thompson was born on 10 June 1939, the eldest of two brothers. He attended Christian Brothers College and studied Civil Engineering at the University of Cape Town. Chris married Vicky Warwick in 1963, enjoying 60 years of married life together, having three sons, Gary, Robert and Mark.

In 1963 Chris was ordained as an elder in the Goodwood Presbyterian Church, and in that same year he was set apart to the Order of Lay Preachers by the Presbytery of Cape Town. As a powerful preacher and a non-stop evangelist, he preached the gospel in many Presbyterian congregations and Senior Citizens Homes. He also preached regularly in the Gansbaai Inter-denominational Church. He challenged many to respond to the Gospel both in his preaching and in his personal visits.

As Youth Leader of Goodwood Presbyterian Church during the ministry of the Rev Christo De Wet he led a group of up to 120 young people running many successful youth camps where a number of young people surrendered their lives to Christ.

Chris as Civil Engineer played a major part in the completion of the new building of the Goodwood Presbyterian Church and assisted in the building of the Monte Vista Church building, Monte Vista Presbyterian Church being a daughter Church of the Goodwood

Presbyterian Church. Chris also served as the Board of Management Chairman and Treasurer showing competence and diligent in his service and making sure that the Church's finances were well administered. Chris assisted in the organisation of many congregational events such as Stewardship campaigns, Evangelistic outreaches, and Fundraising efforts as well as the organising of the 1990 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church held at Goodwood. He served as commissioner to the Cape Town Presbytery and to the PCSA General Assembly. He was also very involved in the two management of the Presbyterian Camp Sites at Simonsberg and Strandfontein.

Chris was later inducted as an elder of the Tygerberg Presbyterian Church (formerly Panorama Community Church) where he also served faithfully. Chris gave everything he had in his service for the Lord, serving with vigor and enthusiasm.

During March / April 2023 Chris spent a few weeks in hospital. When discharged, he and Vicky were able to attend the service at the Tygerberg Presbyterian Church that following Sunday. He was admitted again to hospital on the following Saturday and died in the early hours of the Tuesday morning 25th April 2023.

Chris could have rightly echoed the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7 "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will award to me on that day – and not only to me but to all who have longed for His appearing".

There is little doubt that as Chris closed his eyes in death, he heard his Lord's words "Well done, good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your Lord".

OVERTURES TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

OVERTURE 1 TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA PRESBYTERY OF
CENTRAL CAPE

NOTICE OF OVERTURE (by Manual Chap 14.18-26)

The overture proposal was received at the Presbytery meeting on 14 May 2022.

At a time convenient to Presbytery or when Presbytery considers the Ministry
Committee Report:

By George Presbyterian Session acceptance, I shall move that:

"George Presbyterian Church overtures Presbytery that the .pdf paper "Covenant
Lapsed Baptism" be sent to the Doctrine Committee of General Assembly for
appropriate accommodation in the UPCS Manual at Chapters 1.6-7 / 2.8.1-7 (2.8.4- 7)
/ 3.1-24."

Proposer: R D Adamson Second: C Hodgson

The Presbytery of Central Cape forwarded 'simplicitur' the Overture to the Executive
Commission.

CRAVE OF THE OVERTURE

The Doctrine Committee inserts the following appropriately in the Manual Chapters as
indicated in the overture:

"An adolescent or older disciple, with prior infant baptism whose parents lapsed their
faith covenant and are considered lapsed by their now adult child, who comes to adult
faith commitment in Jesus, may be considered for covenant lapsed adult baptism at their
request. The Session must consider whether the request should be approved."

MOTIVATION – OVERTURE REGARDING COVENANT LAPSE BAPTISM

Theology is not often exciting. This isn't. The chapters on Water in Baptism, Adult
Baptism and Infant Baptism are standard inclusive Covenant Theology.

But what happens in the modern secular era when so many parents took covenant infant
baptism vows for the children - then simply lapsed their faith, abandoning worship,
membership, nurturing of the faith in their children, and tithe lifestyle?

The chapter on Covenant Lapse Baptism analyses the impact of this secular era on
Covenant Baptism theology. Parents black and white made covenant infant baptism

vows, and never worked them out. Their young adults now make Christian commitment, the parents don't even attend in support. Is the UPCSA saying "Your parents' infant baptism vows were good", when it's obvious they were lapsed. Covenant Lapse Baptism is the need of this young person seeking membership.

A 1960's photograph, indexed to show flow of offspring generations and the effect of covenant lapse was used as visual illustration.

The chapter on Metanoia or 'kairos of salvation' preaching is for a highly secularised time when the Church is failing to preach true Covenant inclusiveness, seemingly sliding into relativistic mythology preaching instead. Rather than 'myth' failing, each individual's kairos is meant to be addressed in the manner of the apostolic gospel (Mark 1.4, 15). What is your time of salvation with Jesus? The UPCSA needs to revisit it's 'kairos of salvation' preaching if it is to return to church growth and not continue to grow covenant lapse.

COVENANT LAPSED BAPTISM

Covenant Lapsed Baptism in the era of Secular Parental Apostasy

Theological and Praxis Review of Covenant Adult Baptism,
Covenant Infant Baptism, Covenant Lapsed Baptism, and
Metanoia Repentance Preaching in Modern Secular Context.

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rvcCpoc030821

Rod Adamson ministers with 35 years' melting pot ministry experience in Zimbabwe and inner city Johannesburg as teacher- principal and chaplain of United Church School, (Yeoville, Johannesburg), and pastoring with next generation ministry vision in Johannesburg South and the Garden Route in pastoral charge at George Presbyterian Church. Pastoral context for sacraments has changed significantly in the modern era.

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1. BAPTISM: AMOUNT OF WATER NOT CONTROVERSIAL

Neither the water nor the amount of water of baptism is magic. It is not the water, but the faith of the dying of the old life in Christ's death and the rising of Christ's resurrected life in new life in us by the Holy Spirit, which gives 'born again' regeneration. It is not our act of going through water which delivers. Christ's crucifixion- resurrection act two thousand years ago delivered and is the basis of faith which we should take on.

No baptismal regeneration or water legalism is indicated in Scripture. The baptisms of John the Baptist and Jesus (Mark 1.1-11 and parallels) in the full going under and coming up out of the water of the Jordan river are deliberately role-modelling, but not of water legalistic intent. For the purpose only of faith encouragement, Jesus makes the going under and coming up role-modelling deliberate in it's inclusive prediction of the saving reality of the cross and resurrection (Matthew 13.13-15 with John 2.19-22/4.2) – one's old life must go under with Jesus' death, one's new life must be of the resurrected new life of Christ. However, this role-modelling is kept as rather 'when practical'. The Ethiopian eunuch sees enough water for an immersion baptism and receives it (Acts 8.36-39). Yet the baptisms of Acts 2.41 as full immersion in the water scarce city of Jerusalem, short of commandeering some venue like the pools of Bethesda, is unlikely and not indicated. The same must be said for Acts 9.18/10.48/11.15-18/16.33-34/18.8. Neither is a 'water immersion' legalistic insertion into Acts 11.22-24/Acts 15.24-29 made, which would probably have been necessary for water legalism given the importance of the Antioch discipling event within the emerging global Christianity.

In the global mission sense which Jesus and all the apostles practiced, it is also important to consider both the practicality and problem with claimed water legalism in both extreme climate circumstances of human habitation on earth. Desert dwelling water scarcity peoples in conversion were a near at hand context for Jesus and the apostles, and the demand for full immersion water baptism legalism looks rather like a fanaticism more than a genuine factor of Jesus' presence with such individuals in saving grace. The same must be said of the extreme cold climate situations of snowbound and polar regions in which sufficient water for full immersion water baptism legalism is not just a circumstance of difficult provision, but when available or provided, constitutes a cold extreme experience which is of such unpleasantness when compared to full immersion in the Jordan that one must dismiss any claim for it as legalistic fanaticism.

Alternative methods of water use in baptism - pouring (Isaiah 12.3/44.3/Lamentations 2.19/John 7.37-38) or sprinkling (Ezekiel 36.25) – in conjunction with a preached connection of the water use to the role-modelling type pointing to the saving crucifixion-resurrection experience of Jesus, is a 'whenever practical' use of baptism.

The claim "if you are not full immersion water baptised, you're not baptised" is legalistic fanaticism. Water baptism is not an extreme conversion event, but an inclusive celebration of the saving grace that is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2.1 COVENANT ADULT BAPTISM

Covenant Adult Baptism at the reality of repentant faith commitment was prefigured by the prophetic baptising carried out by John the Baptist (Mark 1.4-5 and parallels / John 1.19-23). Jesus' inclusion of himself in John's baptism, with the conditions of inclusion noted by both John and the apostles (Mark 1.7-11 and parallels / John 1.24-34 with 4.2), instituted repentance baptism as the prime entrance inclusion sacrament of the Church. John the Baptist, Jesus under John 4.2 condition, and the apostles when among the Jews, practiced baptism for individual adult repentant faith within the constraints of the known circumcision based covenant entrance inclusivity of the Jews. No baptism of Gentiles by John or Jesus is known, yet Jesus' Great Commission statement (Matt 28.19-20) that baptism is globally for Jews and Gentiles indicates the new global inclusivity of Christian faith. Jesus' statement of global inclusivity linked to Pentecost in Acts 1.8, and attested by the apostles in Acts 2.38-39, the Peter-Cornelius incidents of Acts 10-11, and Acts 15. John 21.1-11 presents the same Jesus of global inclusivity.

The consistency across the New Testament of repentant baptism as the entrance sacrament of regenerate inclusion is also so evident across the baptism doctrine of all churches that a listing of New Testament references suffices for support. (The "Quaker" Society of Friends exception uses different inclusion theology basis). So, Mark 1.7-11, 10.38, 11.30 and parallels / Matt 28.19-20 / John 1.24-34 with 4.2 / John 3.1-8 / Acts 1.5, 2.36-41, 8.14-17, 10.44-48, / Rom 6.1-11 / 1 Cor 1.17, 10.2, 12.13 / Gal 3.27 / Eph 4.3-5 / Col 2.12 / 1 Pet 3.18-22 / 1 John 5.5-8 / Rev 22.1-3 all preach that each individual must know and receive the 'going under crucifixion- coming up resurrection' experience. Because faith in Jesus is public confession at repentance (1 Tim 6.12), the instituted 'sign' of conversion before Jesus and his Church is baptism. What then of those who grew up included in the covenant of Christian belief?

2.2 COVENANT INFANT BAPTISM

Mark 9.33-37 and parallels, Mark 10.13-16 and parallels, and Matthew 11.25-27 and parallel, and Acts 2.37-39, are indicators of Jesus' and the apostles' inclusive covenant understanding towards children, as much as was child circumcision in the Old Testament. Even though these readings are not directly indicative of infant baptism, and neither were they applied apostolically to make circumcision a Christian basis-of-faith practice, their sense of child inclusion remains.

However, Acts 16.15 / 16.33 / 1 Cor 1.16 with Mark 10.13-16 / 1 Cor 7.14, 1 Cor 10.1f, even if only Pauline originated, indicate an apostolic baptism practice that appears to be a covenant missionary inclusion of children in baptism in line with the covenant inclusion teaching of circumcision of the Hebrews. Flowing out of Jesus' fulfilment of the Old Covenant in the New Covenant, it also indicates both Hebrew and Gentile inclusion in household baptism. Paul's missionary zeal tweaked both circumcision teaching in including Gentiles, and baptism practice in including children, giving missionary method among Gentiles in particular a major boost in gaining believers by virtue of including their children.

The related issue of the individual adult faith commitment of the baptised children then became the accepted infant baptism- covenant confirmation of most major church denominations globally as church history unfolded. It remains a global Christian practice trend that most people of global Christianity are infant-baptised, though statistics of baptism practice are now changing under the influence of both increased secularisation and the huge power of American 'FOMO' (Fear Of Missing Out) socio-cultural pressure.

2.2.1 Seal of Baptism Not Magical Superstition

Both covenant infant baptism and believer baptism theology use the concept of the seal of baptism as the sacrament of the Holy Spirit presence in the believer's life. However, their claims of use are usually about the grace status of either infant or believer having received baptism, and how theologically they endure for resurrection despite any adversity of circumstance, for the Holy Spirit has acted. Usually baptism is part of the concept of being sealed, sealed by the Holy Spirit given public act in baptism.

σφραγις, *sphragis* 'seal', with verb σφραγιζω, of literal sense from signet ring and clay or wax sealing of letters (Rev 7.4-8), has figurative use of closed up/protected/authenticated in God purpose. So 2 Corinthians 1.22, Ephesians 1.13/4.30, all have probable applied link to the Son of Man of John 6.27 who is 'sealed' by the Father. The deep Holy Spirit meaning of 'seal' is theologically correct. God 'seals' the individual's salvation in Jesus, baptiser in the Holy Spirit.

Correctly noble as this noble theology is, this does not override practical circumstance, however. What is the God status of the adult believer who lapses their faith? Sealed, because of baptism? Lapsed because of a deserted faith (2 Timothy 4.10)? Standard theology is that it is Jesus who discerns or judges, and not us. Therefore we regard a believer sealed as just prodigally far off (Luke 15.11-24). But what then of a parent 'covenant' confessed in baptism of the infant under infant household baptism, but since then both parent and child just secularised and left so far off, or 'lapsed', that the child's faith is never given the covenanted support? What should direct our theologising and pastoring about this increasingly prominent context among global believers?

'Sealing' legalism in baptism, just like water legalism, needs new Reformation '*ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*' review.

2.3 COVENANT LAPSED BAPTISM

The apostolic New Testament roots of Covenant infant baptism as a wider mission applied 'household' baptism practice have been presented. However, most baptismal theologies of infant baptism (for example, Berkhof, Calvin, Cullmann), almost exclusively focus on showing apostolic validation of the inclusion of children into the covenant and their entrance into the Church. Very little attention has been given to a most vital corollary aspect of covenant baptism which has become a major mission and pastoral crisis in covenant baptism churches. What theologising applies concerning those who have taken or received baptism (infant or adult) and then lapsed their own faith, or worse, lapsed their own faith which was given as the basis of covenant infant baptism of their offspring?

In our modern secularising global era, the decline of Christianity and proliferation of secular atheism or agnosticism or pluralist humanism in replacement, has occasioned vast numbers of lapsed disciples like at no time in Christian history. Consequently numbers of infant baptised adolescents and adults, who have been raised without the covenant faith, now find their praxis is of parents of lapsed faith and without faith. Some come to conversion faith. Yet when they seek covenant believer baptism, this is denied to them for they have already been 'infant baptised' and should not be 're-baptised' and so are referred to 'Confirmation' even when this is nothing more than a magical notion without genuine spiritual reality. In theology and praxis, these are the adolescents and adults of covenant lapsed baptism - those who came to repentant faith despite parental covenant lapse, and who can express that their parents lapsed their covenant. Whether adolescent or adult, these individual repentants should should take up their own covenant lapsed baptism in signed up recognition of their parents' lapsed faith. For any magical water or 'sealing' approach wrongly applied to them is as fanatical a water or 'sealing' legalism as full immersion baptism or excessive 'sealing' theology can be.

Neither the water nor theologising saves.

2.3.1 Biblical Basis for Covenant Lapsed Baptism Recognition

Esau of Genesis 25.29-34 / 26.34 – 28.9 is the first covenant lapse person of the Old Testament, dispensing with the conditions of covenant loyalty for utilitarian convenience even of faith in his life choices. One consistent Old Testament reality from then on is that there were circumcised members included in the covenant who lapsed their faith, either by deliberate idolatry or the same backsliding utilitarian convenience taken as life choice by Esau. Thousands of circumcised and baptised (1 Corinthians 10.2) covenant participants in the Exodus lapsed their faith for the idolatry and 'fleshpots' of Egypt and had to be removed from God's people by the forty years wandering in the wilderness before God's people could enter the promised land. This continued throughout the cycles of covenant opportunity, sin and oppression, repentance and return to covenant of the Judges, and the time of the Kings with their prophetic cycles. During the time of the Kings and Prophets, the reality of what is meant by the "lost Ten Tribes of Israel" also occurred, obviously including a majority who had been circumcised.

The presence of those in 'inclusion but of lapsed covenant' stayed among the Hebrews until Jesus the last prophet, and the fall of the temple in AD 70, and stays as a praxis reality among Christians of Jesus' new covenant inclusion. It is a known apostolic era praxis with Judas the most unworthy, but also known in the Galatian legalists, the so-called 'pre-Gnostics' of Colossians, the Demas of Colossians 4.14 / Philemon 1.24 / 2 Timothy 4.10, and outlined in the various contexts of John's seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor in Revelation.

Both the Old Testament (Jeremiah 3.8 with a different use of imagery of 'divorce' from Isaiah 50.1), and the New Testament in individualised use (Hebrews 10.26-29; 12.16-17 and Jude 1.23 reality) know of the reality of covenant lapse. The standard response among the Hebrews was a repentance and re-commitment to the Covenant when such was practical. The New Testament 'individualised' faith response is less clear, depending on the lapsed person 'unlapsing' in order to remove the Hebrews 10.26-29; 12.16-17 and Jude 1.23 persistence in unbelief problem. This 'unlapsing' would also have to be timeous to the upholding of covenant infant baptism vows, or else the infant of the covenant infant baptism in question remains effectively unfaithed.

The use of σφραγισ *sphragis* 'seal' also offers no further discernment into the parental lapsed covenant context which their adolescents or next generation adults face. Both covenant infant baptism and believer baptism theology use the concept of the seal of baptism as the sacrament of the Holy Spirit. However, whether it is the lapsed parent or the next generation lapsed infant baptised now adult, no magical sealing notion is genuine theology.

Within covenant theology and Covenant baptism churches, a 'straying away' from the original intent of all entering into covenant, inclusion and baptism basics, and into a more magical 'accommodationism' has crept in. A parent or set of parents may have made their own adult confirmation and then had their next generation offspring 'infant baptised' - all the while drifting through a relativistic attendance at a Christmas service, family funerals or weddings, but having no real discipleship. As has become widespread euro-centrally, secular rather than faith based lifestyle is drifted into without covenant return so that the infant baptism covenant is actually just deserted. Yet the parent or parents, family and next generation child or children are magically 'accommodated' as covenant real, in a cheapening and deserting of the covenant for secular choice and lifestyle has become their real truth of faith.

3. METANIOA PREACHING IN A COVENANT LAPSE CONTEXT **- RETURN TO REPENTANCE ADULT COMMITMENT**

Covenant Theology congregations are two sacrament churches – baptism (infant, adult, covenant lapsed) and Communion. Yet a modern two-fold effect unbalances this. Modern secularist members are increasingly lapsing discipleship in faith, worship and tithing attendance, and lapsing 'in faith child-rearing' of their children. Add to this the modern younger generation preference (whether fashion trend or not is irrelevant) for 'American' multimedia Christian spiritual culture with online media spiritual culture, in which the place of the conversion and commitment 'call to salvation' has priority that mainline churches do not give. This two-fold change has seen some Covenant theology congregations so age in membership, as well as fail to reach the modern younger generation, that the sacrament of baptism is falling into disuse.

3.3.1 Metanoia Preaching in Covenant Theology Churches

Baptist and Pentecostal insistence on *μετάνοια metanoia* repentance adult response based baptism has had profound impact in this secular era. From Mark 1.4 / Acts 2.38, this remains the biblical trend of baptism, and should be of Confirmation. This remained so until the modern secular era of 'myth Jesus' preaching in largely mainline traditional churches with a relativised 'lapsed repentance' Confirmation/Adult Baptism for consensus commitment to the 'woke' secular spirit of common humanity that claims to trend inclusivity of all human spirituality. The simultaneous rise of American multimedia Christian spiritual culture and online Christian media spiritual culture, in which the place of the conversion and commitment 'call to salvation' has priority that mainline churches do not give, has seen a much greater uptake among the next generation and much greater drift of disciples from mainline churches into metanoia spirituality than would have occurred should the mainline churches have retained metanoia preaching.

Despite the FOMO (fear of missing out) 'concert entertainment' value of call to commitment / altar call / conversion and adult baptism practices within American multimedia Christian spirituality, one reality is that such calls have found widespread prominence over Confirmation acceptance among the global media culture next generation. Churches not giving participation in the 'conversion and adult baptism' experience are losing disciple members in great numbers as 'covenant accommodationism to the secular' is expressed as 'mainline churches are betraying the gospel' and only repentant baptism is the Holy Spirit measure remaining for disciples to keep the faith. When the Holy Spirit factor is accentuated to include 'conversion, adult baptism and Holy Spirit baptism/infilling', the church 'drift' is even stronger. Covenant theology churches face a kairos moment of "two sacrament" truth of their own making.

3.3.1 An UPCS A Issue Unattended To

UPCS A Manual 1.6-7 / 2.8.1-7 (2.8.4-7) / 3.1-24 omit any discussion of how a lapsed parental covenant impacts on the adolescent, reducing the water to something magical but also unscriptural, and offering no pastoral support to ministers, Sessions or adolescents as to how to proceed. As has been seen in section 2.3 of this paper, this is a typical covenant baptism theology oversight. These sections of the Manual are inadequate in being dogmatically noble concerning 'inclusion', dogmatically legalistic of 'one baptism' and magical concerning 'sealing' - when modern 'world come of age' secularist parenting has left many adolescents and young people stuck out on a limb when it comes to making their own adult faith commitment. Baptist/Pentecostal 'concert, media and web based' discipleship celebrates their form and order taking the place of the covenant theology churches' inadequacy. How easy it has become for Baptist/Pentecostal pastors to say of the infant baptised "As far as we're concerned you're not baptised". Infant baptised adolescents/young people of modern 'secularised discipleship' background have neither parenting, worship or role modelling which would mean anything more than covenant lapsed.

3.3.1 A Possible UPCS A Covenant Theology Approach

When approached by a prior infant-baptised adolescent or young person for their 'own faith' baptism, neither Ministers nor Sessions have to make judgment calls about the status of the 'discipleship of covenanting parents' or have to choose between parents and adolescent or young person.

Should the adolescent or young person consider that they did not receive 'covenant parenting discipleship' in terms of the parents' own faith, worship and tithing attendance and lapsing 'in faith child-rearing' of their children, then that is the applicants' perception. The relationship between the adolescent or young person and their parent/s can then be pastored on from there.

The choice to 'uphold' the prior-mentioned dogmatic 'inclusion', 'one baptism' or 'sealing' legalism or magicking is not a real but false choice. The kairos of salvation is with the adolescent or young person, and not any perception regarding the parent/s discipleship. Should the adolescent or young person have come to Jesus in metanoia repentance, and have expressed that the status of their 'covenant raising' was 'lapsed' by their parent/s, then there should be no hesitation in granting permission for the baptism.

Most Confirmation or Baptism applications are made by form. The inclusion of a simple 'lapsed parental covenant' question in the form, and answer gained, would then allow Minister and Session to pastor the adolescent or young person and the parent/s accordingly. An example question would be:

"Why do you consider the infant baptism covenant made by your parents to have been lapsed by your parents"?

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OVERTURE 2 TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA PRESBYTERY OF
CENTRAL CAPE

NOTICE OF OVERTURE (Manual Chap 14.18-26)

The overture proposal was received at the Presbytery meeting on 14 May 2022.

At a time convenient to Presbytery or when Presbytery considers the Ministry Committee Report:

By George Presbyterian Session acceptance, I shall move that:

"George Presbyterian Church overtures Presbytery that the .pdf book "The Ethiopian Fulfilment, Pentecost and Israel" be sent to the Ministry Committee of General Assembly as an input narrative for ministry candidates additional to 'take sides' colonialist or liberationist dominated narratives for Church progress in African context.

Proposer: R D Adamson Second: C Hodgson

The Presbytery of Central Cape forwarded 'simpliciter' the Overture to the Executive Commission.

CRAVE OF THE OVERTURE

Assembly directs the Ministry Committee, in its selection of tertiary theological training institutions, to prepare selection guidelines which show lack of bias for 'myth Jesus' exegesis trending that has declined European and American Biblical theological training and Church growth with it's more Religious Studies 'spirit of common humanity' academic (whether liberal or struggle version), and openness to 'apostolic authorship/authentication Jesus' exegesis training which has led Africa's "Ethiopian Fulfilment" Church growth as probably the greatest Church growth since Apostolic and Church fathers times.

MOTIVATION – OVERTURE REGARDING THE ETHIOPIAN FULFILMENT

In it's English title "The Quest of the Historical Jesus", Dr Albert Schweitzer's 1905 book "Von Reimarus zu Wrede" became the label of the quest for the historical Jesus narrative which still dominates Euro-centric exegesis – but could also be labelled as the quest for the myth Jesus. It's wider 'Religious Studies/Science of Religion/Comparative Religions' form has become the academic under-girding of 'superior' Euro-centric academics on religions – all religion is superstition, religious writings superstitious myth. (Biblical Studies still accepts a historically probable apostolic authorship or apostolically authenticated authorship of the New Testament, so historical eye-witness account.) This 'liberal' Euro-centric myth-dominated 'side' or narrative seems to lead UPCS ministry training. It's future church growth prospect is bleak, it is just a broken hallelujah.

Critique from two of the four atheist horsemen is appropriate. Richard Dawkins: "The moderates' [liberals'] position seems to me to be fence-sitting. They half-believe in the Bible but how do they decide which parts to believe literally and which parts are just allegorical?" (1)

Daniel Dennett, Linda La Scola: "Unlike their conservative counterparts, liberal denominations have made huge, socially conscious changes—performing same-sex marriages, accepting gay and women clergy, and (quietly) accepting the Bible as mythical, not factual truth. And what is their reward? They are losing membership, while the numbers of atheists and people with no religious affiliation are growing." (2)

The other 'side' narrative could be labelled as the 'Quest for the Contextual Jesus', the Jesus of our Culture, our Liberation, our Ubuntu. In theological academics, this applies myth Jesus academics for its own contextualisation, overlaying the myth exegesis with the narrative of culture, liberation and ubuntu. In African Theology facing the very real experience interaction of gospel and culture, liberation and ubuntu. Nathaniel Ndiokwere notes that this **"renewal movement has arisen out the African situation itself, in a spontaneous reaction against the old order. It has been stimulated by the same factors which have been responsible for numerous movements for reform and theological renewal throughout history. Traditional concepts touching basic institutions and ways of life, community structure, laws and taboos, religious leadership, symbolism, and ritual are interpreted according to biblical categories. There have also been markedly successful attempts to combine all that is valid in traditional society with the world of biblical faith."** (3)

Alongside simultaneous 'Ethiopian Fulfilment' narrative, Afro-centric church growth multiplied as 'Quest historical or myth' narrative debilitated Euro-centric Church growth.

However, the same can not be said for the continuing of Kairos Document 'speak truth to power' in Africa, even South Africa. Too many 'liberation or Afro-centric' statements of African Independence, like the 'Ujamaa African Socialism' Arusha Declaration or Franz Fanon's "The Wretched of the Earth", the Accra Confession or even the Freedom Charter, have been overtaken by either dictatorship or atrocity events or State Capture (exposed by the Zondo Commission in South Africa) which made a broken amandla of the Quest for the Contextual Jesus. The **Kairos** Document gave example of 'speaking truth to power' against the systemic evil of the Apartheid state, and even noted this about the misuse of theology and God: **"The god of the South African State is not merely an idol or false god, it is the devil disguised as Almighty God – the antichrist."** (4)

The prophetic test of 'speak truth to power' is *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* Lk 4.18-19. Should a 'kairos' line in the sand not be the estimated R36 billion of water stolen from the poor. In various water projects and negligence, finance for water for the poor has been stolen by corrupt officials, largely ANC, in local, provincial and national departments. State Capture has variety in billions stolen, but stealing water from the poor? (5)

Why are churches not calling for the SACC/SACBC to lead a **Kairos 2** against the systemic evil of the corrupt ANC state?

Shrinking growth outcome will continue with the academic 'Quest for the Historical/Myth Jesus', or 'Quest for the Contextual Jesus' narratives leading UPCS ministry training. The Ethiopian Fulfilment offers another narrative, and the Holy Spirit has led its growth largely without Harvard or Oxford, Princeton or Edinburgh, Heidelberg or Paris, and without the internet or most other modern necessities. Like the Carpenter's people - the

Easter women, the Galilee fishermen, the tax collector and doubter, the stray Pharisee and the carpenter's brother – thousands of African Christians on foot or bicycle, at riverbanks doing washing, looking for jobs in cities, in missions or churches of mostly simple variety, reaching God's people 'beyond the rivers of Ethiopia' to the African ends of the earth', have been used by the Holy Spirit to deliver one of Christianity's greatest miracles – in 1910 about 12 million, in 2010 over 500 million.

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5. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-04-09-watergate-whistle-blower-lifts-lid-on-probably-the-most-perfect-example-of-anc-state-capture/>

OVERTURE 3 TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA PRESBYTERY OF CENTRAL CAPE

NOTICE OF OVERTURE (Manual Chap 14.18-26)

The overture proposal was received at the Presbytery meeting on 14 May 2022. At a time convenient to Presbytery or when Presbytery considers the Finance Committee Report:

By George Presbyterian Session acceptance, I shall move that:

"George Presbyterian Church overtures Presbytery that the .pdf paper "Church Planting under Excess Bureaucracy" be sent to the Manual Committee of General Assembly for appropriate reform of UPCSA Manual Chapters 6-10 in order better to assist office bearers of Sessions and Boards of Congregations to prioritise oversight of congregational ministry and not bureaucratic burden fulfillment."

Proposer: R D Adamson Second: C Hodgson

The Presbytery of Central Cape forwarded 'simpliciter' the Overture to the Executive Commission.

CRAVE OF THE OVERTURE

The Assembly directs the Manual Committee to review and modernise its Chapter 6.29-52, Chapter 7, Chapter 8, Chapter 16.103-109 paragraphs related to new and transitional congregations, Session financial management function, and 'ministers in secular employment' (bi-vocational) in order better to bring in management function relieving spiritual and other office bearers, elders, or deacons/management board members of excessive bureaucratic burden which is causing increasing resistance to taking up not just such roles in church leadership, but also spiritual growth roles, so compromising church growth.

MOTIVATION – OVERTURE REGARDING CHURCH GROWTH UNDER EXCESS BUREAUCRACY

Because each one can grow in 'sola scriptura' taking faith 'sola fidei', in God's grace 'sola gratia', each believer is part of discerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads the priesthood of all believers in Presbyterian democracy. We are not episcopalians or Catholics, 'top down' from those of superior Holy Spirit monopoly who push down on the inferior believers, who must then just accept and say OK.

But welcome to the world of the artificial intelligence algorithm. What happens when government, super-corporates, and even super-denominationalism or super-

churches do all this - ID, FICA, SARS, RICA, MUNICIPALS, banks, Facebook, Google, Instagram, and more - using Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms for profiling to control taxes, advertising for profit extraction, or do citizen surveillance so much, even adding biometric MAD (Market Access Devising) controls that members and elders approached to be congregational office bearers refuse the profiling demands. Bank signatory; too much bureaucratic paper/queues, Session Clerk - Municipal Rates/Car Representative/PBO Rep/Title Deeds/Internet and telephone Profiles etc; long queues, endless paper; Treasurer; 'SARS/PAYE representative', UIF, Workman's compensation; on and on... Then General Assembly and Presbytery - Returns, assessments, pensions, endless papers, proposals, decisions, Committees, and 'Yes this is Presbyterian', Committees and add more Committees, all sending papers and decisions and 'instructing' that Session must have this as its 'profile desk' or 'elder portfolio', and give returns, so many of which help the local congregation very little. For they are just 'top down' heavy, heavy who's up top, and nothing of priesthood of all believers and coming from the bottom. And then the fuel price sky rockets, and for George Presbyterian Church (GPC) it won't just be near R2500 to get to just one Presbytery meeting, but soon near R3000 or over - just to make one representation in manual correct way. Four times a year, that's +R12000, and the amelioration of that did the one thing that should not easily be forfeited under 'priesthood of all believers' - it reduced covenant representation.

Apex 'top down' government, super-corporate economic, and even denomination and church pyramid profiling with biometric MADs - with more and more excess bureaucracy growth all the time. Pay under FICA, SARS, MUNICIPALS, Church Returns and Assessments - all set so that the GINI-peak State Owned Enterprise (SOE), Super-Corporate Enterprise (SCE), Denomination Super-Church (DSC) always does the South African measure 'The more things change, the more they stay the same'. Gini-apex 'top down' elite power cabals or committees benefit, often with state capture or monopoly capture - NOT the Holy Spirit 'priesthood of all believers'.

The book "Biblical Leadership in the World's Most Gini-Coefficient Unbalanced Economy" (Adamson RD, www.resurrectlife.co.za) can clarify. Covenant assessment demanding Gini-Co-Efficient unfair covenant representation is oppression, just as taxation without representation is tyranny. GPC needs differentiated assessment. GPC Session wants to know why it should not receive differentiated assessment. Covenant representation costs mean we don't share in the priesthood of all believers like close by Egoli Presbytery churches, or Cape Town or Gqeberha. GPC assessment should be of differentiated level; for example: pay a steady 10% to GA, 3% to Presbytery, instead of 20% and more. For we don't get 'priesthood of all believers' covenant representation, we get covenant unfair representation in a DSC.

A song can be adapted --- "You've got an uncle in the Presbytery business, Louis Berkhof." Calvin is the grandfather, Berkhof the uncle. P589: "Reformed Church government recognises the autonomy of the local church. So that...every local church is a complete church of Christ, fully equipped with everything that is required for its government. It has absolutely no need of it that any government should be imposed upon it from without. And not only that, but such an imposition would be absolutely contrary to its nature". P584: "It is one of the fundamental principles of Reformed/Presbyterian government that the power or authority of the Church does not reside first of all in the most general assembly of any Church, and is only secondarily and by derivation from this assembly, vested in the governing body of

the local Church; but that it has its original seat in the consistory/session of the local Church, and is by this transferred to the major assemblies” etc presbyteries, synods, assemblies. Thus the Reformed system honours the autonomy of the local church.”(1)

The world of excess bureaucracy is a direct derogation of the Reformation’s ‘priesthood of all believers’, as the paper “Church Planting under Excess Bureaucracy” indicates, with all the attendant implications for Church growth and especially for gospel mission new church planting. Members are simply voting with their feet and either walking away from church or office bearer responsibility, indicating a shift either to increased ‘top down episcopalian’ oversight, or to ‘sole proprietor minister’. The UPCSA needs to address its manual prescriptions of both management and training better to adapt ministers and Sessions to the new context of increasingly heavy excess bureaucracy under State, SOEs, SCEs, and DSCs so that the ‘priesthood of all believers’ is not just Gini-apex eliminated.

OVERTURE 4 TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

OVERTURE TO TRANSFORM CONGREGATIONS IN EASTERN PROVINCE INTO A PRESBYTERY

INTRODUCTION

M'chinga Presbytery is one of the three Presbyteries in Zambia with a total number of fourteen Congregations and a membership of four thousand seven hundred and ten (4,710). Nine of the Congregations with a total membership of two thousand, four hundred and sixty-five (2,465) are based in Lusaka while five of the Congregations with a total membership of 2,245 are based in the Eastern Province of Zambia. This overture provides insights into the contextual composition of the congregations in Eastern Province, the leadership preparations undertaken, and the challenges being experienced by the Congregations based in Eastern Province in participating in the life of M'chinga Presbytery. The overture concludes by suggesting the creation of an additional Presbytery for the congregations in the Eastern Province of Zambia to lessen the challenges being experienced.

MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS IN EASTERN PROVINCE

The Eastern Province of Zambia has five Congregations and twenty-one preaching stations with a total membership of two thousand, two hundred and forty-five (2,245). There are currently three (3) Ministers, nine (9) evangelists, and Eighty-Seven Elders. The province has the potential of hosting five ministers. Below is the table showing the statistics.

CONGREGATION	MINISTER	PREACHING STATIONS	EVANGELIST	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	TOTAL NUMBER OF ELDERS
Chama	Rev Sonye Banda (Interim Moderator)	a). Dungulungu b). Mundalanga c). Muzande d) Buzukulu	Esther Zgambo	250	10
Chipata	Rev Zaccheous Chilembo	a). Vizenge b). Mnoro	Susan Phiri Zimba	250	20
Lundazi	Rev. Beaton Lungu	a). Tigone b). Eluhangeni c). Chiyona d). Zilonde e). Munyukwa f). Vuu g). Nyalubanga h). Mwasemphangwe	1. Exhilda Kangwa Mkandawire 2. James Nyirenda 3. Emelda Mbewe Kabungo	815	25
St John's	Rev Beaton Lungu	a). Romase b). Dambo c). Chibwe d). Katipa e). Kapichila	1. Prisca Nyirenda	700	20
St Peter's	Rev Sonye Banda	a). St Paul's b). St Luke's	1. Kenani Ndhlovu 2. Stephen Mwandila	230	12

PREPARATION OF EASTERN PROVINCE TO BECOME A PRESBYTERY

Since 2019, M'chinga Presbytery put in place deliberate programmes to prepare Congregations in Eastern Province to become a Presbytery. The Congregations were declared a Zone with relevant Committees put in place to run the Zone. In addition, M'chinga Presbytery Executive conducted leadership seminars to ground the leadership in matters pertaining to leading the Presbytery to be created. The Presbytery is satisfied that the Congregations in Eastern Province are ready to become a Presbytery.

CHALLENGES

The most significant challenge that the Congregations in Eastern Province are experiencing is a lack of participation in the life of M'chinga Presbytery due to the distance between Lusaka Congregations where other Congregations in M'chinga Presbytery are based and the nearest congregation in Eastern Province which is 510 km away and the furthest being 1000 km away.

With the global economic downturn, commissioners find it costly to attend meetings called by the Presbytery. When the Presbytery calls for a meeting in Eastern Province, very few commissioners from Lusaka can afford to travel, and vice versa.

Ultimately, it must be noted that the population of Eastern Province relies heavily on agriculture activities as the main economic driver. Most of the members therefore are subsistence farmers growing just enough for their consumption hence finding it difficult to raise money for travel and upkeep during meetings. However, this area has large numbers of members and has the potential to grow further as can be observed from the statistics. Though the Congregations have these challenges, the Presbytery is convinced that the Congregations can sustain the Ministry as they have done in the past especially since the Province is poised for further growth.

CRAVING OF THE OVERTURE

M'chinga Presbytery is satisfied that the congregations in Eastern Province are ready to stand on their own as a presbytery as they have been adequately prepared. It is for this reason that we request the Executive Commission to:

- a) Resolve that the five Congregations in M'chinga namely Chama, Lundazi, St Johns, Chipata, and St Peters together with all the twenty (20) preaching stations based in Eastern Province constitute a new Presbytery.
- b) That the New Presbytery shall be named Eastern Zambia Presbytery.
- c) The area of Eastern Zambia Presbytery shall be the area East of Luangwa River up to the border with Malawi and Mozambique.

The M'chinga Presbytery resolved during its Presbytery meeting held on 10th February 2024 to forward the Overture to the Executive Commission and that Rev Edward Chirwa and Elder Benson Njobvu who are commissioners to the Executive Commission shall appear before the Executive Commission to support it. In case the two are not able to appear for genuine reasons, the presbytery nominated Rev Jane Nyirongo and Elder Rhoda Mtande to appear before the Executive Commission and support the Overture.

May the Executive Commission grant the craving of the Overture.

Benson Njobvu
Clerk of the Presbytery

OVERTURE 5 TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

To the UPCSA General Assembly, via the EG Presbytery Council and the John Henderson Soga Memorial Synod.

Overtures to Facilitate the Improvement of the Quality of the UPCSA Ministry.

Background to the Overtures

The overtures arise from a discussion in JV Mdlalose's recently published book, titled "Cloud of Witnesses: A Channel of Timeless Values of the Christian Ministry."

Basically, the book bemoans what it sees as a "fast" deterioration of the UPCSA standard of ministry, that is clearly resulting in the poor quality of the life and work of several UPCSA congregations—a situation that forebodes a bleak future for the UPCSA.

The Purpose of the Overtures

The purpose of the overtures is to stimulate a strong desire or passion in the General Assembly and the wider Church to pluck up the courage to endeavor to turn around this alarming situation!

References to Relevant Pages of the Book

At the end of each one of the proposals that are listed below, relevant pages of the book, where the proposals are discussed more fully, will be reflected to provide the background to the proposals.

A Deep, Worrisome Thought Behind the Proposals

A profound warning and pearl of wisdom that lies behind my proposals is one that I picked up in the course of my research for writing this book, namely, an utterance that was once made by an 18th-century thinker, known as Edmund Burke. Burke says: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men (and women of course!) to do nothing. Clearly what that utterance means in relation to our situation as the UPCSA at this point in time is that, if we, as the present generation of the UPCSA leadership, should back off and do nothing about the negative developments that are taking place in the life of our church, we shall, by so doing, be providing fertile ground for the rise of extremely destructive forces that will, eventually, literally push our church over the precipice!

Below each proposal, comments based on the major points in the book, that are related to that particular proposal, are made to provide more clarity on the proposal.

In the light of the foregoing preamble, I propose as follows:

Proposal 1: That, in the light, particularly of pages 305 to 312, of the book, the Assembly seriously considers suspending the Church's policy of part-time ministry (that is provided for in Chapter 16 of the Manual of Faith and Order) to replace it with a thoroughgoing course for training ministers (generally referred to as "Parish Planning") in the art of developing congregations to such a level as to make it unnecessary for a minister to take up other employment to top up his/her stipend.

Comments

Why Should Full-time Ministry be Accepted as the only God-ordained and Viable Manner of Rendering Worthy Service to God and his People?

It is because:

(a) a call to the ministry, in the understanding of the Bible, means God's command to the callee to make him/herself fully available to do God's work of shepherding his people. Hence God's consistent habit of pulling out a callee from his/her vocation, familiar environment or comfort zone, and giving him/her this new, "exclusive" occupation of playing the role of shepherd to his people.

Typical Examples of God's Calling of People to the Ministry

(1) Abraham is removed by a call, not only from his occupation(whatever it was !),but even from a familiar environment, where he had a chance of finding alternative means of livelihood. The Lord demands that Abraham gives up all of his "life of convenience" and embark on God's mission.

(2) Christ's callees also were not consulted, but commanded to put aside whatever they were doing and follow Jesus. Significantly some of them were called while in the midst of attending to really important family responsibilities, such as the man who was preparing to bury his father. Jesus retorts to this man's excuse of being unable to respond to his call with a bold and totally unregretful statement: "Let the dead bury their own dead. You go and proclaim the Kingdom of God"(Luke 9:59-60).

(3) Also worth noting is the fact that when God poses his "inconsiderate, non- negotiable call" to a person to join the ministry, he clearly assumes that the callee knows that he(God) is the owner of all the riches of this world, and that, therefore, he will be able to provide for all of the callee's material needs.

(4) When Jesus sends off his 70 disciples(Luke 10:1ff) on missionary work, he makes a point of emphasising that they should not let worry about their material needs cause them to believe that they have to be absolutely self-sufficient(even by means of seeking extra employment, if this becomes necessary!) and have no need for support, either by the communities, that they are going to evangelise or by God himself! Jesus boldly discourages these disciples from taking with them a lot of provision. He says: "Don't take a purse or a beggar's bag or shoes"(Luke 10:4).Instead, "whenever you go into a town, and are made welcome, eat what is set before you-----for workers should be given their pay."(Luke 10:7).In other words, in my view, Jesus here is saying that, as ministers, we ought to believe that if we do our work thoroughly and satisfactorily, our congregations will certainly be deeply touched by our wholehearted, sacrificial service, and make a well-deserved provision for our material needs.

(5) Extra Employment is not an Option

Clearly, according to Jesus, a minister's option of going to engage in some other employment to find means of livelihood is, strictly speaking, a transgression of the agreement that he(Jesus) has entered into with him/her as a disciple, that he has sent out on his mission, namely, the agreement that the minister's activity will be confined within the congregation, and that he/she should depend on the congregation for his/her maintenance as its worker, for "workers should be given their pay."

Rev TT Pitoyi's Experience: A Perfect Illustration

The profile of the Rev TT Pitoyi in chapter 5 of my book epitomises very well the scenario that Jesus portrays in the 10th chapter of Luke. The profile shows how small the income of the Gillespie Congregation was when the Rev Pitoyi started serving it. However, after some years of hard work, the Congregation's cash flow improved so well that some members of the Deacons Court proposed, without any influence from the minister, that his stipend be raised, and that he be granted a regular increment.

For Rev Pitoyi the answer to the problem of an inadequate stipend was not to look for a job to provide a second cheque, but it was the training of the congregation to raise funds, so they could be sufficiently financially stable to meet their financial obligations, including the paying of the minister's stipend.

The Question Facing the Church: Are We here Dealing with an Intractable Problem of an Unavailability of Funds in Congregations or Simply a Lack of Faith, Commitment and Skill?

I certainly do not believe, like some of my colleagues do, that the congregation's raising of a minister's stipend is such an uphill struggle as to justify a congregation's allowing its minister to serve them part-time-that is to reduce an already insufficient time by the hours the minister will spend on his/her second job.

Indeed, the question here is ,if some ministers, such as the Rev Pitoyi, can see the wisdom of empowering a congregation, through full-time service, such that it finds it possible to meet its obligations, how come other ministers fail to realise that engaging in part-time ministry reduces a minister's time to nurture their congregations effectively enough to be able ,like the Congregation of Gillespie, to raise enough funds to maintain the minister, and keep him/her happy and strong enough to bear the responsibilities of not only shepherding, but also of developing the congregation.

Frankly, the indisputable answer to that question is that, as ministers, more often than not, we opt for part-time ministry because we lack enough faith to believe that God can never fail to reward a committed worker in his vineyard with abundant success and complete fulfilment. Certainly, Rev Pitoyi's and other similar profiles reflected in my book bear the validity of that observation incontrovertibly. Those profiles show clearly that the congregation of a minister who has a profound faith, a total commitment, and sharpened skills provides a leadership that helps a congregation literally surprise itself with its phenomenal growth and achievements that it accomplishes during that minister's tenure.

Answer:Not an Extra Cheque,but a Change of Heart

The complete turnaround of the ministers who have returned to full-time ministry has convinced me that, if the church were to create a well-organised forum in which to discuss, in great depth, parttime vis-avis full-time ministry, several ministers, who are part-time would realise that there is more to gain in remaining in full-time ministry than risking the difficult "balancing act" of trying to be involved in two(or even more!) occupations at the same time.

Watching the performance of the returnee group of ministers, I notice that, as a result of the change of heart that they have experienced, and following their decision to return to full-time ministry, their determination to make a success of their vocation has improved, and their congregations are reflecting noticeable growth and vibrancy.

This clearly observable, positive development of the discovery by the returnees that a minister's actual source of income or maintenance(as Jesus lays down in Luke 10)is his/her own vocation(if it is properly handled!),is something that we as the entire church should celebrate! We should celebrate the returnees' discovery that the problem that had diverted them to part-time ministry was, not that of material need, but a change of heart.

A Choice between Parttime and Fulltime Leadership

Frankly, I believe that as a church we are faced with a choice between a strong, effective leadership of full-time ministers, and a weak, tottering leadership of part-time ministers, who give the Lord only a fraction of their time and strength.

This overture that proposes a suspension of the policy of part-time ministry is an earnest

plea that I am making to the General Assembly of my church to give a serious attention to the looming collapse of our church's leadership as a result of the unavailability of the full strength of the present church leadership, a good number of whom is involved in part-time ministry.

What I find even more serious, in this regard, is the fact that, not only does the policy of part-time ministry frustrate the Church's efforts to develop congregations by reducing the minister's time of service by allowing him/her to work parttime, the policy goes as far as even clearly giving the impression that a minister is placed in a congregation, not necessarily to give his/her full time and strength to doing the all-important work of DEVELOPING the congregation, but merely "to give the congregation the honour of having a minister living amongst them, even if he/she is not rendering any service to the congregation. "I am saying this because that to me is the only genuine interpretation that anyone can give to Clauses 16.107-16.109 of the Manual of Faith and Order.

In my candid view, the policy in Clauses 107 -109 of the Manual of Faith and Order is a glaring contradiction in terms, for how can we, as a church, make a position and amenities meant for a full-time minister available to someone who is employed elsewhere full-time? Are we allowing this to happen because we are short of ministers? If that is the case-if we are short of ministers-I would propose that we rather beef up our drive to recruit ministers rather than kill congregations who already exist by appointing to those congregations ministers who have no time to develop and nurture them because they are fully occupied in their jobs.

I believe, therefore, that legislation to facilitate the release of ministers to go into part-time ministry should be replaced with constitutional guidelines for facilitating the training of ministers in parish planning, the fruit of which, I believe, will, without a doubt, be the rendering of the use of the parttime ministry option absolutely irrelevant and unnecessary.

Proposal 2

That against the background of pages 266 to 283 of the book, the Assembly sets up a programme to revamp and improve radically the quality of the training of the Church's ministers, looking particularly at the possibility of:

- (a) reverting from University to Seminary training, through, for example, exploring the possibility of joining a seminary that is already in existence;
- (b) restructuring the PAT programme along the lines of that one of the former PCSA;

©establishing an In-Service-Training Programme to finalise and fine-tune aspects of training, which may have been treated somewhat scantily at Seminary, as well as providing other courses, which the Seminary may not have provided at all, while they are, in fact, essential for the ministry of our church.

Comments

The Eunach's Pathetic Question to Philip

If the General Assembly were to undertake the task of introducing those changes in the training programme of our Church leadership, they would have, like Philip, responded to the question that is silently being asked by many of our ministers: "How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?"

Proposal 3

That with the thoughts in pages 204 to 286 in mind, the Assembly sets up a Think Tank(a

Research Team) to provide the crucial service of doing on-going research on the life and work of the Church, so that they can:

(a) advise the Assembly, in the light of sound research, of moves the Assembly should make to enhance the Church's development and vibrancy;

(b) alert the Assembly timeously to developing counterproductive trends in the life of the Church, so that the Assembly can act promptly to forestall those trends;

Proposal 4

That, in the light of pages 314 to 318, the Assembly agrees to add a clause to the Manual of Faith and Order that authorises it to set up a "Senior Leaders Delegation" (of Ministers and Elders) to be part of the General Assembly, in an advisory capacity, using their experience, wisdom and expertise to guide the proceedings of the General Assembly

Comments

The title of my book is: "Cloud of Witnesses: A Channel of Timeless Values of the Christian Ministry."

The key point of the book that the title seeks to underscore is that the present generation of ministers need to be advised to avoid making the mistake of believing that adapting the Gospel to the modern era in which we live means discarding those principles of the Gospel that do not tally with the modern style of life. I believe, to the contrary, that the opposite is true. For, if Scripture is the infallible Word of God, against the standards of which we should measure our styles of life and fashions, whatever "modernisation" of the Church's ministry that takes place should be in line with the standards of faith—"the timeless values of the Christian Ministry"—that are founded on Scripture.

In my book I make the observation that over the years the old stock of Commissioners at the General Assembly has gradually been replaced by younger people who have not had the experience of being part of a church that was run strictly in terms of old values of the ministry, that did a lot to pre-empt many problems, which have arisen in the life of the church today, as a result of the abandonment of those values.

A good example of those values is the understanding of God's calling of a person to the ministry as God's pulling of that person out of whatever occupation he/she was involved in, and setting him/her apart to serve as a minister, and never to look back. This total (100%) commitment of the earlier ministers to their vocation doubtlessly ensured the stability of the life and work of congregations and the entire church.

Then later, for sheer purposes of convenience, without any consideration of what the Bible teaches us about the principle of one's being set apart as a minister, and the permanence of one's calling to the ministry, a proposal was put to the Assembly to introduce parttime ministry, and it was adopted; and only today, after much has been done by the policy of parttime ministry to destabilise the church's ministry are we beginning to realise the seriousness of the folly of disregarding Scriptural principles when we formulate constitutional guidelines of the Church.

The Value of the Senior Leaders Delegation

The value of adopting the Senior Leaders Delegation proposal, as I see it, would be to take advantage of the availability of ministerial veterans in our Church, who have a great wealth of experience, wisdom, and expertise, that they have acquired over a number of years of service in the Church. These veterans know, out of experience, the worth of some priceless ministerial values that we might throw overboard as useless relics of past eras of the

Christian ministry .During debates at Assembly, they might very well bring out valuable pearls of wisdom from their wide experience and help us resolve problems that could have become serious stumbling blocks on our way to making crucial breakthroughs in our struggle to take our church to the heights that it must attain if it is to make a difference in the mission of the Church in this country now and in years to come.

As I make it clear in the proposal, the aim is to involve these veterans, not as voting members of the General Assembly, but as advisors, who will pose no threat to anyone when it comes to decision -making.

Proposer: Rev JV Mdlalose

Secunder:

PETITIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

PETITION 1



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

JOHN HENDERSON SOGA
SYNOD
P.O. BOX 201, DUTYWA, 5000

24 December 2023

The Rev Vusi Mkhungo
Clerk of Assembly
The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
Tiyu Soga House
18 Dann Road
Glen Marais
1619

Dear Rev Mkhungo

PETITION TO THE VENERABLE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION BY THE JOHN HENDERSON SOGA MEMORIAL SYNOD

The Synod of John Henderson Soga Memorial wishes to petition the Venerable Executive Commission scheduled to sit within the bounds of Tshwane Presbytery in June 2024 to consider the matter of the constitution of future Executive Commissions and General Assemblies through hybrid platforms. The Synod wishes to request the venerable Executive Commission and/ or the Venerable General Assembly to rescind its decision to hold hybrid General Assemblies or Executive Commission meetings. **The Synod wishes the Executive Commission and General Assembly be held physically or in person**

This petition is submitted in terms of paragraph 14.27 of the Manual of Faith & Order

REASONS AGAINST THE HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND IN FAVOUR OF IN PERSON MEETINGS

It is generally alleged that the General Assembly meeting virtually is cost effective. That is with regard to the Central Office spending less on General A logistics (such as catering and accommodation).

In effect, however, the said costs for logistics referred to herein above, (and also quite taxing, Zoom equipment) have been shifted to Presbyteries. Hence they foot the bill for their respective Commissioners (to the Assembly) to engage virtually.

There is however, very limited benefit to that august body, in terms of,

1. fellowship in celebrating the life, work, mission and ministry of the denomination.
2. quality of its deliberations and resolutions.

- a) Commissioners' participation and presence in the meeting is not guaranteed, as unstable availability of network in predominantly rural Presbyteries has inhibitive effect.
 - b) A sizeable number of Commissions experienced problems regarding the use of a particular widget and consequently they could not participate in deliberations during INSAKA, plenary and voting sessions.
 - c) A situation wherein all Commissioners need to have smart gadgets to be able to log in and participate during that highest Council's proceedings, equates the General Assembly to a Council for the "haves", where the "have nots" are systematically excluded.
 - d) notwithstanding technological uncertainty that affected many Commissioners, the Assembly business got rushed, whereas in most cases the INSAKA groups struggled to record 50% of their respective memberships' full complements.
3. Under such circumstance the Denomination cannot proudly say its General Assembly convened to rigorously transact its business.
But rather as a matter of expediency, among others, its council met with an interest to expedite the conclusion of its agenda, at all cost.

Proposals

1. That the Executive Commission rescinds the decision to hold Executive Commission Meetings and General Assemblies virtually

Respectfully Submitted



Rev SD Gwala
Clerk

PETITION 2 TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024 PETITION

The Tshwane Presbytery, noting that this is the second time we are making this request and in the light of fact that all funds in all three countries have continued to be problematic in terms of contributions, administration and hefty fines, petitions the Executive Commission to make the principle decision to close the funds and appoints a task team to:

- take the necessary steps to close the pension funds
- assist all UPCSAs employees to make their own pension provisions,
- alter the manual so that payment into a minister or employee's pension fund is a mandatory part of their package or emoluments.
- provide advice and guidelines in this regard.

Motivation: Running our own pension funds has proven to be too expensive and non-compliance places the Denomination and the Funds at risk. The Denomination is not equipped to manage and administer funds like these especially in the climate of non-compliance that is currently prevalent.

3. Notices of Motion

3.1. Closure of the Pension Fund

Theo Groeneveld

The Tshwane Presbytery, noting that this is the second time we are making this request and in the light of fact that all funds in all three countries have continued to be problematic in terms of contributions, administration and hefty fines, **petitions the Executive Commission to make the principle decision to close the funds and appoints a task team to:**

- take the necessary steps to close the pension funds
- assist all UPCSAs employees to make their own pension provisions,
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- provide advice and guidelines in this regard.

Motivation: Running our own pension funds has proven to be too expensive and non-compliance places the Denomination and the Funds at risk. The Denomination is not equipped to manage and administer funds like these especially in the climate of non-compliance that is currently prevalent.

P_3.1.1 Presbytery noting that adequate notice had been given, adopted the petition, instructed the Clerk to bring it to the Clerk of Assembly and appointed Theo Groeneveld and Violet Baloyi to speak to it.
It was proposed, seconded and agreed.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY TO THE 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light. (Micah 7: 8 NIV)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Lord is risen – He is risen indeed. This report is written on the Easter Monday, as I reflect on the message of the Sunday service that I attended on Sunday and reminisce on the good things that the Lord has done for me and my family, for the Central Office staff, for the UPCSAs and the Church catholic, and for humanity and the rest of creation. As I reflect on how many times I have fallen and risen, the words of Micah came true, “Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.” We serve God whose will is done in our lives, not the will of the people. The UPCSAs have been sustained by God for almost 25 years of its existence, falling and rising as a missional church that it is called by God Almighty to be a missional church that it claims to be.

2. This is my last report as the General Secretary of the UPCSAs, as I will be completing my term on the 31st of August 2024. What a joy! We sing praises to the Highest God for raising us after every fall and for always being our light when we fall in darkness. A reflection of our journey as the UPCSAs General Secretary will be placed on a chronicle and submitted separately. That should be made available for use by all the structures of the denomination as they may see it applicable in the situations. The incoming General Secretary and the Priorities and Resources (P&R) Committee should be instructed to manage the information contained therein. This is a due diligence report covering the life and work of the Central Office (but not meddling into what should be covered in the report of the Church Office and Human Resources Committee - COHRC), and the establishment of the Assembly Standing Commission. In this report, I will focus on unfinished/continuing business and those areas that the UPCSAs should pay attention to for continuous improvement. It should be noted that the report is also written in the broader context of a denomination that is completing a quarter of a century (25 years) of its existence since its establishment in September 1999.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE CENTRAL OFFICE

3. The Central Office of the UPCSAs is established to be the fulcrum of the administration of the denomination, including the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the decisions of the General Assembly and Executive Commission. Hence, the Central Office defined itself as the Lighthouse of the Reconciled Community of Christians. It is the wish of the General Secretary working with the office staff to see the UPCSAs having a cohesive, effective, and efficient administration. Towards that end, the following is highlighted:

- 3.1 Virtual meetings of the leadership of Presbyteries are held at least once in two months. It is gratifying to note that there is remarkable improvement in the attendance of these meetings by the presbyteries.
- 3.2 It was resolved that Presbyteries should conduct administrative business in February and submit the returns by the end of the month. These meetings would address, among others, the issues that are raised in the Appendix D3 of the Manual of Faith and Order. That would encourage the Presbyteries to fulfil the role of pastor parvorum and oversight. It is saddening to report that very few Presbyteries comply with that decision. In the meantime, there are always complaints of congregations that are not compliant with many aspects of administration, including the payment of some of the ministers’ stipends and pensions, the registration of some of the ministers with SARS (in the case of ministers in the congregations in South Africa), failure by some of the congregations to submit the PBO and NPO numbers (in the case of congregations in South Africa), failure by some of the congregations to

submit documents permitting our congregations to occupy their sites and not registering their erven (in the case of the congregations in the townships, failure to insure the buildings in most cases, and the lack of support to ministers' widows/widowers and orphans. It is sad that when the worst befalls a minister and a calamity befalls a congregation, the first point of call is the Central Office. When the staff respond in the negative, there is disgruntlement. The Presbyteries should be made to deliver in accordance with their mandate that is given in Chapter 10 of the Manual of Faith and Order.

3.3 The General Secretary and some senior staff members have started conducting roadshows for the purpose of aligning the administration of the UPCSA – Presbyteries and the Central Office. In the few Presbyteries that have been visited, the roadshows have been acclaimed as fruitful and beneficial. Some of the hurdles that have been experienced include some Presbyteries not responding to the correspondence that is sent to them regarding the arrangements, difficulties in synchronising the dates, consideration of the UPCSA's staggering income. It is however a considered view that the roadshow can help to maintain equilibrium in the administration of the UPCSA.

4. The Central Office receives support from the COHRC. The staff have been guided by Committee in the processes of goals setting and performance management, information and knowledge management and the general human resources management functions. The morale of the staff continues to be commendably high, despite the UPCSA's economic situation which, as always reported, can deal adversely with the morale.

5. The Central Office, as a way of celebrating (commemorating - in the case of those who been called to be with the Lord) the fifteen moderators that the UPCSA has had since 1999, planted fifteen trees. This is also a way of contributing to the promotion of eco justice – the green life. The office encourages all the Presbyteries and congregations to promote this way of life. As a way of marking the 25th anniversary of the UPCSA, trees should be planted and other initiatives to promote eco and climate justice should be taken. The Church in Society Committee, through its Eco/Environmental Justice Desk, should be requested to spearhead this campaign.

6. The Office has been experiencing difficulties with the provision of water and continues to experience with the provision of electricity, due to loadshedding. The staff lost too much of working time because of these, as they would have to close the office when there is no water and could not have access to the means of communication when there is no power. Towards an uninterrupted provision of water, a JoJo tank was procured and fitted. Through the Finance Committee, a study of the best efficient power systems is being conducted to mitigate the problem of power outage. The approved system will be in place soon.

7. The general upkeep of the Central Office, its buildings and precincts, is commendable. The staff should be applauded for their dedication and diligence. The feedback that is received from the clients and stakeholders is encouraging. This applies equally to the rendition of services across the board, not only pertaining to the maintenance of property. There have been improved relations between the office and the entire denomination.

THE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION (ASC)

8. The General Assembly resolved to have the ASC established, which was done immediately after the sitting General Assembly. This structure was, indeed, long overdue. Through this structure, some inroads have been made in the processes of implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The structure increases the capacity of the denomination in ensuring accountability. The General Assembly and the Presbyteries are urged to support this structure and not consider it as a structure to police others, but as a provision of the

centre that should hold firmly to promote cohesion and avoid anarchy.

9. Here below is an evaluation of the life and work of the UPCSA in the light of its vision.

RECONCILED COMMUNITY OF CHRISTIANS

10. **Reconciliation.** The 2012 General Assembly had envisaged a community that would be reconciled in all respects, in which all would feel equally important, treasured, and loved. The marks of discrimination and division in the community were highlighted. Much has been achieved towards the attainment of that ideal. However, much as the UPCSA is turning 25 years old in 2024, the UPCSA is not yet a seamless institution that knows no racial, ethnic, nationalist, and former denominational divisions. The love of a reconciled community – the UPCSA – should transcend the love of a white church, black church, former PCSA, former RPCSA, a church of a certain ethnic group, or a church in a certain nation. It is sad that these divisions manifest greatly in the provision of ministry and in the lives of the ministers. The UPCSA should put a concerted effort to cause its ministers to value, love, support, and care for one another. Most of the conflicts that have been experienced, as referred to the AARP and to the office of the General Secretary for mediation, involve ministers against ministers. Mostly again, the differences have nothing to do with the life and work of the church, but with individual differences. The mediation approach should be commended for having achieved win-win situations, a brother/sister finding another. However, the concerted effort that is hereby referred to has to do with finding and addressing the sources of conflicts and building capacity to manage such conflicts. Those conflicts have contributed to stagnation which works against the UPCSA's decade programme of "Going for Growth".

11. **Provision of ministry in the UPCSA.** The previous Executive Commission, with an endorsement by the last General Assembly, mandated the Mission and Discipleship Committee, Priorities and Resources Committee, Ministry Committee, and the Presbyteries to conduct a study that will see uninterrupted and effective provision of ministry in the denomination. It is envisaged that the exercises will address the issues as mentioned above and promote the provision of ministry that sees no racial, ethnic, nationalist, and former denominational barriers. Let us promote the togetherness that the Moderator refers to in her theme, so that we can realise our strength – "Stronger together". A word of gratitude should, however, be extended to the brothers and sisters in the ministry who sacrifice their time and the time of their congregations to serve those congregations they are appointed to as interim moderators. That ministry is strenuous and costly. That cannot be the last word about the provisioning of ministry. Ideally, every congregation should have a minister.

12. **Strengthening of Congregations and Presbyteries.** The Congregations and Presbyteries should be strengthened for mission. The UPCSA's definitions of a missional church and a congregation should always be reflected on. A congregation is a basic manifested of the character and ethos of the UPCSA. For ease of reference, the definitions are shared below.

WHAT IS A MISSIONAL CHURCH?

A Missional Church is a **sent** Church, which understands its primary work as **witnessing** to Christ and **serving** God in the **world**.

A Missional Church is **shaped** by God **for** the community into which God has placed it. It is **focused** on those who don't yet know Jesus and on working **with** God in bringing **fullness of life** (involving justice, healing, wholeness and reconciliation) to **all the people** of the world.

UPCSA DEFINITION OF A CONGREGATION

"A Congregation (or worshipping community) is a group of people who gather

regularly to meet Christ in Word and Sacrament, practice mutual care and make disciples in our changing contexts. They do so while seeking to participate with God in the transformation of the world. As communities, they move toward sustainability in leadership and ministry.”

13. **Seven Focus Ministries.** In the Executive Commission that was held in Matatiele in 2015, it was agreed to focus on the following seven ministries: Ministers’ Welfare and Development, People with Disabilities, Eco justice, Men, Women, Youth, and Children. The objective was to have every congregation making a concerted and deliberate effort to address each of these areas. Please refer to the chronicle for the details. It is sad that, in some situations, the following is witnessed:

- 13.1 Some ministers go for months without stipends. The disparities in ministers’ stipends are alarming.
- 13.2 Some ministers go on pension or die without safe pensionable income.
- 13.3 Some ministers go on pension or die having no homes.
- 13.4 Some ministers cannot access or ignore developmental opportunities.
- 13.5 Some ministers, including pensioners, are not visited (pastored to) by the Presbytery Moderators – pastor pastorum function.
- 13.6 It is only when some ministers’ marriages are on the rocks that they are noticed, when very little or nothing can be done to salvage them. There is no effective individualised pastoral approach.
- 13.7 There is no plan to support ministers’ widows/widowers and orphans.
- 13.8 Despite the establishment of a committee on People with Disability, very little is done to promote this ministry.
- 13.9 More should be done to promote eco/environmental justice.
- 13.10 There should be effective and deliberate programmes and plans to develop ministry to/with/about women, men, youth, and children in the UPCSA.

14. **Transnationality.** Transnationality is the test of character and faith in the UPCSA. God, out of own volition, brought us from the four nations to be and do God’s mission together. It would be fitting and expected of us to always search for God’s will and purpose as the UPCSA in our time and space. Much as having the rich and the poor in the same church is a call to mission, so it is the same to have people from different nations. It is the diversity that enriches us. No one should be made to feel like they are an appendage to the broader denomination. All of us should strive to perfect this. That would contribute towards the fulfilment of the value of Ubuntu – interconnectedness, interdependence, finding your being in belonging, among others. The past moderator emphasised that the UPCSA is a church in Africa. Going back to basic is about denying and negating the power of the brutal decision of the 1884/85 Berlin Conference that partitioned Africa arbitrarily for self-aggrandisement of the colonial powers.

EXERCISING A PROPHETIC WITNESS TO CHRIST

15. **Prophetic Witness.** The UPCSA is a reconciled community that exercises a prophetic witness to Christ. As such, in its mission statement, the UPCSA states that the denomination “*will proclaim our Triune God in Southern Africa through ... Visibly proclaiming the Kingdom of God through unity, justice, peace and love*”. Being prophetic and standing for justice should be in our DNA. The UPCSA should equip the saints for this mission. The Ministry Committee should ensure that, in the formation and training of ministers, there should be deliberate effort to expose the students to prophetic theology, ecumenical theology, and incarnational and kenotic strands of Christology, among others.

16. **Five-fold Ministries.** The UPCSA resolved, in the past, to institute the five-fold ministries as a way of equipping the saints for work of the church. The Executive Commission should urge the Ministry Committee and the Mission and Discipleship Committee to resuscitate this work and bring it to fruition.

STRATEGIC PLAN

17. The UPCSA resolved to give another five years up to 2026 to the strategic plan. The Priorities and resources Committee conducted an evaluation of the plan and that has been shared throughout the denomination. All the structures of the denomination (especially the fellowships and Presbyteries) should be urged to use the revised plan and, where appropriate, infuse it in their existing plans and those still to be crafted.

LEGAL CASES

18. There are very few outstanding legal matters, with only one in the civilian court.
- 18.1 **Rainy – Mthatha.** The UPCSA had won the case against Rainy Mission. What was outstanding was a matter of gaining access to the building. The Office and the Presbytery of Mthatha should still pursue the matter.
- 18.2 **The Mpolweni Land Question.** The Mpolweni land question is being driven by the Department of Rural Development and Land Affairs in Pietermaritzburg and the residents of Mpolweni under the oversight of the Office and the officials of the Drakensberg Presbytery. The update will be given as it becomes available.
- 18.3 **Walaza vs UPCSA.** This is the latest case and the only one in civilian court. The details of the case may be given by the AARP/Court of Assembly.
- 18.4 **4Ways United Church.** The matter is under the care of the eGoli Presbytery.

THE 25 YEARS OF THE UPCSA’S EXISTENCE

19. The twenty years of UPCSA’s existence is a milestone that all in the UPCSA should thank God for. It is like it was yesterday when we celebrate the 20th anniversary in the Central Cape in 2019. Another five years quickly went past. The Priorities and resources Committee had been tasked to determine the activities that would be in place to mark this milestone. Ours is to call the members of the UPCSA be proud of and celebrate this achievement. We fell and rose by the grace of God. When it was dark, God brought us to light. We should always be grateful.

COMPILING THE PROFILES OF THE UPCSA MINISTERS AND CONGREGATIONS

20. Going to the UPCSA’s 20th anniversary celebrations in 2019, a request had been made to submit the profiles of the congregations. Very few congregations complied with that request. COVID-19 dampened the spirits further. This task should still be pursued. In addition to that, there should be profiles of the UPCSA ministers. It should be easy to access that information from our website. The P&R Committee should be tasked to undertake this assignment.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS – UCCSA/UPCSA UNION NEGOTIATIONS

21. The negotiations between the UCCSA and the UPCSA did not make significant progress. The new General Secretary will have to undertake this assignment, working with the Negotiations Committee.

EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE

21. By the grace of God, the UPCSA appointed me as the General Secretary effectively from 1 September 2014. The journey comes to an end on 31 August 2024. When this calling came my way, I was very comfortable and approaching the pick of my career in the South African Navy – a naval component of the South African National Defence Force

(SANDF). It could have been a struggle to decide to jump overboard and respond to God's calling. With the support of a strong family at that time, it was never difficult. I thought that the kindness that my family would express would be to say, "leave that thing and go for greener pastures". Alas! They said the contrary and the calling was getting stronger every day. God's will had to be done and the appointment went easily. I thank God for making the road traversable, for protection and for being an omniscient God. God, being all wise, helped me to negotiate and resolve the most difficult of the situations. I never missed a day in the SA Navy, and I never regretted a day in the 10 years of service as the General Secretary of the UPCSA. I could not have done it on my own.

22. I served a total of five Moderators: Rev Mukondeleli Ramulondi, Rev Dr Robert Munthali, Rev Dr Peter Langerman, Rev Sipho Mtetwa, and Rev Lydia Neshangwe. I could not have asked for any better Moderator than Mukondi to start my term with. Mukondi had been following all the processes of the UPCSA and attended almost all its meetings. I had not been part of most of the processes of the UPCSA, as I spent most of my time in the SANDF. There was a grand orientation. Each of the moderators left their mark in my growth and development. I thank them all. I got a foretaste of the leadership of Rev Dr Amon Kasambala. I wish him all the best as prepares to take over in June 2025.

23. As I started my term, my predecessor, Rev Prof Jerry Pillay had to start his term at the University of Pretoria. That meant that he, too, had to go through his orientation processes at the University, However, he made himself available to me in person and telephonically. I never felt alone and thrown in a deep end. I found the Clerk of Assembly, Mr Tom Coulter very useful in providing the context of every story and incident. I was, therefore, able to determine the response. Otherwise, I would find myself using the military command principles to solve the church matters. By the time I left the SA Navy, my experience included serving two respective units as a Commanding Officer – two years in Muizenberg and four years in Gordon's Bay, as a Senior Staff Officer (SSO) in two portfolios (Navy Foreign Relations – two years, and Navy Transformation - two years). So, the Navy way of doing things had become second nature to me. The grace of God was just sufficient to undo all the military jargon and practices and restore the "God thing". Thanks to Uncle Tom. Mrs Joan Botha had been in the office of the General Secretary for many years and her wealth of knowledge was a treasure. There were two other senior staff officers – Rev Dr Eddie Germiquet (Ministry Secretary) and Mr Geoff Jooste (Chief Finance officer). Each in their special ways, and every staff member in the office helped me to find my feet.

24. As I conclude my term, I have Rev Vusi Mkhungo, the Clerk of Assembly who joined the office in 2015 and Ms Christine Kasambara, an Executive Assistant in the Executive wing. The team is wonderful. In the course of time, I had Rev Malungelo Jita and Rev Thembinkosi Nopapaza, respectively as CFOs, and Rev Dr Pat Baxter, Rev Dr Pakiso Tondi, and Rev Zwai Mtyhobile as Ministry Secretaries. I have enjoyed the dynamics that each of them brought to the team. The team is not complete. As you call the Central Office, either in person or telephonically, Ms Poppie Rakgomo is ever willing to help, Mama Nonhlanhla (Lucky) Makgoka is always hospitable, Mr Chauke has already made the environment in the garden welcoming. You go upstairs and get Ms Ntombi Currie providing answers to the issues of Ministry and Mr Lwando Faleni ready to help with finance matters. As you go out through the back door, the ever-useful Mr Ronnie Maqubela is there, diligently administering the Presbyterian Education Fund (PEF) and helping on other tasks. I thank God for each of them – a team that has always been ready to provide effective and efficient service to the reconciled community of Christians.

25. I have been ably led by the respective conveners of the Church Office Committee (later known as Church Office and Human Resource Committee) and the respective members of that Committee. When I was appointed, Rev Prof Masango was the Convener and helped me to settle down. He was followed by the Rev Makalima who had been a member of the committee. Lastly and currently, we have Rev Glynis Goyns. They and the

respective members of the Committee guided me well, using their skills to perfect the issues of office administration. Along with them is the diligent and zealous Mr Ryan Johnson and his Committee. He has been a utility especially in Information, Communications and Technology (ICT).

26. The Conveners of the General Assembly Committees and their committees who made sure that the work of the General Assembly was delivered well are very much appreciated. The members of the General Assembly Ecumenical Relationships Committee supported me in this aspect of the work of the UPCS. They have been retained over many terms, as they are a winning team. The current team comprises Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe (Moderator), Rev Dr Amon Kasambala (Moderator Designate), Rev Prof Fundiswa Kobo, Rev Mautji Pataki, Rev Craig Morrison, Rev Thomson Mkandawire, Rev Wayne van Heerden, Rev Zwai Mtyhobile, Rev Vusi Mkhungo, Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, Ms Samkeliso Siwela, Ms Karabo Mamabolo II and Ms Afika Babazile Rwayi.

27. The leadership of the then Associations and, currently, the Fellowships have been supportive in making sure that the work of the Fellowships is aligned with the work of the General Assembly. The General Assembly Working Group on Associations (GAWGA) under Rev Prof Pillay was the climax in this realm of the work.

28. The officials of the Presbyteries have been admired. The sacrifices they made over above their congregations (for ministers) and other occupations (non-clergy) did not go unnoticed. My colleagues, the ministers in the UPCS, became brothers and sisters and gave unwavering support. Those random calls to check how we have been doing kept us going. The welcoming gestures wherever and whenever I appeared affirmed us as the face of the UPCS. The popular dictum, "Yangena icawe – there comes the church" was not taken lightly or with pompousness. It was taken as a call to duty. It drove me to always ask, "What more must I do to serve God and the UPCS?" The ecumenical community has become my second home after the UPCS. I have been sharpened by other irons. THANK YOU.

CONCLUSION

29. We are reaching a half term mark for the Moderator of the General Assembly. We are, indeed, stronger together. We thank God for her leadership. There is a rise after every fall. Darkness does not define who we are. We are the children of light. The Lord is risen – He is risen indeed.

30. The past year has seen the UPCS working communally, "stronger together". We have traversed the uncharted waters and ventured into the untraversed terrains. The Assembly Standing Commission has been a remarkable innovation that will, if used optimally, ensure accountability in the UPCS, and keep the denomination together.

31. The men and women of the UPCS have, once again, demonstrated their love of and allegiance to the denomination. Modest as the UPCS may be, so many acclaim it for its contribution in their lives in various ways. We have lost some women and men of faith. May they rest in ternal peace. We always pray that God will comfort and strengthen their families.

32. The UPCS is turning 25 years old this year. That calls for us to pause and reflect on the wonderful deeds of God who always brings us out of darkness into marvellous light. Indeed, our adversaries should not gloat over us, for we have risen after every fall and, when we were in darkness, the Lord has been our light and salvation.

I TAKE A BOW! ADIEU!!

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission requests the Priorities and Resources (P&R) Committee to
 - a. engage the reflections shared by the General Secretary on his 10 years journey in the office; and
 - b. manage the information by, *inter alia*, referring to the respective structures the parts that may be applicable to them.
3. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that the senior staff members in the office conduct roadshows in the Presbyteries for the purposes of alignment and capacity building; and
 - b. encourages Presbyteries to support the staff in the conduct of the roadshows when they are being visited.
4. The Executive Commission
 - a. supports the idea of planting trees as one of the ways of marking the 25th anniversary of the UPCSA; and
 - b. requests the Church in Society Committee, through its Eco/Environmental Justice Desk to spearhead this campaign, an action that should be continued even after September 2024.
5. The Executive Commission notes that the Central Officer
 - a. procured and fitted a JoJo tank towards an uninterrupted provision of water; and
 - b. is considering ways of mitigating the power outage that is caused by the loadshedding.
6. The Executive Commission appreciates the establishment of the Assembly Standing Commission and the progress that the structure is making.
7. The Executive Commission urges the Ministry Committee and the Mission and Discipleship Committee to resuscitate the work on five-fold ministries and bring it to fruition.
8. The Executive Commission instructs the P&R Committee to oversee the task of compiling the profiles of the ministers and the congregations of the UPCSA.

**THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024**

CLUSTER COMMITTEE REPORTS

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION CLUSTER

MANUAL COMMITTEE

MANUAL COMMITTEE REPORT TO EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

The committee is pleased to present this report to the Executive Commission of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa meeting in June 2024. It covers the work of the Committee during this past year, including three matters referred to the Committee by the 2023 General Assembly. The Committee has met (on Zoom) on four occasions between August 2023 and March 2024 and members are to be thanked for their consistent work.

The Committee consists of the following members: The Revs. Anna Banda, Bongiwe Ngebulana, Jane Nyirongo, Alastair Rodger, Robert Thema and George Marchinkowski, Ms Thulani Nayo, Adv. Irene Netangaheni, Ms Fikile Ndlovu and Ms Thembi Nxumalo.

1. Referrals from 2023 General Assembly

The following matters were referred to the Committee by the Executive Commission in 2022:

1.1. Chapter 20 - The Synod of the UPCSA in Zambia

The Assembly sent this decision concerning Chapter 20 to the committee: "The General Assembly

(a) notes the passage of the Synod of Zambia legislation through the General Assemblies in 2012 and 2014.

(b) notes that the chapter was sent down under the barrier act but was never enacted.

(c) condones the fact that the legislation has been used and allows it to continue to be used by the Synod in terms of para 12.49.

(d) enacts and inserts Chapter 20 in the Manual of Faith and Order; and

(e) instructs the Manual committee to continue to engage in a consultative process with the Synod of Zambia on amendments and present a report to the 2024 Executive Commission."

The committee then engaged in a process of consultation with the Synod in Zambia, first by correspondence, and then, on 3 November, the Convener had a day workshop with office bearers of the Synod and the three Presbyteries in Zambia. The chapter was scrutinised to eliminate legislative conflicts between the powers of Presbyteries (Common rules in Chapter 10) and the Synod (new Chapter 20). The Synod and Presbytery officials made numerous inputs which were discussed and included in a final version. This version was presented to the Synod in March 2024 and approved. The committee records its thanks to the Rev. Thomson Mkandawire, Clerk of Synod, for his assistance in this whole process.

Several typographical and grammatical errors were corrected. The committee presents the final version as Appendix A for publication as Replacement pages.

1.2. Overture from the Presbytery of Zimbabwe on Transnationality

The Committee noted the following decision of GA23, "The General Assembly

- (a) adopts the overture for discussion.
- (b) sends it down to Presbyteries.
- (c) instructs Presbyteries to send their views to the P&R Committee in collaboration with Manual Committee by 28th February 2024; and
- (d) instructs P&R to report to the 2024 Executive Commission."

While the committee has studied the content of the Overture and corresponded with the P&R Committee in an attempt to clarify this committee's role (envisaged by the word "collaboration"), it has not received any instruction on what to advise on or research.

1.3. The issuing of Cost Orders by the Court of Assembly/Assembly Administrative Review Panel

The Committee received the following decision of Assembly: "The Assembly refers the issue of the issuing of costs orders by the General Assembly Administrative Review Panel to the Manual Committee for consideration; and instructs it to report on this to the Executive Commission."

The committee discussed the matter and issued the following advice:

A Cost Order may be imposed with three provisos:

- (a) A full warning of the possibility of a Cost Order (in General) must be given in advance when a Complaint/Appeal is being considered;
- (b) The costs to be real costs incurred but limited to the holding of the hearing;
- (c) Mediation must always be the first mechanism that the AARP offers to avoid holding costly hearings.

The Court of Assembly/AARP discussed the matter and communicated its agreement with the Manual Committee's advice. Amendments to Chapters 15 and 18 are proposed.

2. Amendment to the duties of the Moderator's Chaplain/s

A reference was received from the Priorities and Resources Committee arising from a report from the immediate former Moderator about expanding the duties of the Moderator's Chaplain/s especially after the meeting of General Assembly. The committee proposes the following amendments:

- (a) In para 12.33, add the words "(or Chaplains)" after the words, "The Moderator's

Chaplain" and the words "meeting of General" before the word "Assembly".

(b) In 12.33 (d), remove the words "at the opening Communion service, and on" after "should the Moderator so determine, on" and "other" before the word "occasion."

(c) In 12.33, add (g) accompanying the Moderator on official visits during the Moderator's term of office (at the Moderator's request);

(d) In 12.33, add (h) keeping contact with the Moderator and the Moderator's family in a pastoral manner and providing care and spiritual direction as required;

3. Church Office and Human Resources Committee

The committee received a request from the Church Office and Human Resources Committee to include reference to the Human Resources Manual (as approved by Assembly) in the *Manual of Faith and Order*. The committee accordingly makes the following proposed amendments:

(a) In Chapter 13, change the name of the committee in the title and in paras. 13.51. to 13.54. to "The Church Office and Human Resources Committee."

(b) In para 13.51, change "personnel management" in (a) to "Human Resources" and in (b), change "personal" to "psychological."

(c) In para 13.52, add "The Committee is guided by the Human Resources Manual as adopted by the 2023 General Assembly." at the end of the paragraph.

4. Amendment to the provisions on Retirement of Ministers

It has been drawn to the attention of the committee that despite the introduction of a "contract" (See Decisions of the 2018 General Assembly), allowing ministers to extend their tenure from the normal retirement age until the age of 70, the Stated Supply provisions are being used to extend ministerial tenure even further. It is for this reason that the committee is proposing a redraft of some of the provisions on the retirement age of ministers as well as some of the paragraphs on Stated Supply.

(a) paragraph 16.7. is replaced by para 16.7.1. "In South Africa and Zimbabwe, a Minister retires at the end of the month in which he/she reaches the normal Retirement Age of 65 years, unless otherwise provided for in the Rules of whichever Pension Fund to which she/he belongs. (See the Rules for ministers appointed in South Africa in Appendix C)

Note: The rules of the South African Fund provide for a Minister who was a member of the PCSA Pension Fund at 31 December 1999 to retire at the end of the month in which he/she reaches the age of 65 or 68 years and for a Minister who was a member of the RPCSA Pension Fund at 31 December 1999 to retire at the end of the month in which he/she reaches the age of 68 or 70 years.

(b) paragraph 16.7.2. is added, "16.7.2. A minister who is a member of the South African

Fund may continue to serve after retirement on a contract basis until the end of the month in which he/she reaches the age of 70 years. The congregation approaches the Presbytery before the minister's normal retirement date with a proposal which must be approved by the Presbytery. In such cases, the minister may remain a member of the Pension Fund with contributions still being borne by both parties. The contract may not be extended beyond the end of the month in which the minister turns 70.

- (c) paragraph 16.7.3. is added, "16.7.3. In terms of Zambian law, a Minister may retire at the end of the month in which he/she reaches 55 or thereafter up to the age of 60 years.
- (d) The line, "The appointment of a Retired minister may not extend that minister's tenure in the congregation from which she/he retired or extend a contract beyond the age of 70." Is added to the end of paragraph 16.168.
- (e) The words, "serve as Stated Supply in the congregation from which she/he retired" is added to para 16.173 after the words, "No retired minister may" and before the words, "nor may she/he serve in any one Congregation for more than two years, unless no other alternative exists."

GW Marchinkowski

CONVENER

Proposals:

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission instructs the Clerk of Assembly to issue Appendix A, the new Chapter 20, as replacement pages, inserting it into the *Manual of Faith and Order*.
3. The Executive Commission notes that the Manual Committee is ready to collaborate on researching or advising on the implications of Transnationality.
4. The Executive Commission inserts the following paragraphs on Cost Orders into Chapters 15 and 18:
 - (a) para. 15.34, "The Panel may impose a Cost Order, but it must issue a warning of the possibility in advance when a Complaint or Application for Review is being considered, the costs will be confined to the costs incurred for the holding of the hearing, and the Panel must advise mediation (See para. 15.25 to 15.33) as the first mechanism for resolving conflict.
 - (b) para. 18.127, "The Court may impose a Cost Order, but it must issue a warning of the possibility in advance when an Appeal is being considered, the costs will be confined to the costs incurred for the holding of the hearing, and the Court must advise mediation (See para. 15.25 to 15.33) as the first mechanism for resolving conflict.
5. The Executive Commission amends para 12.33 of the Manual as follows:
 - (a) In the first line, add the words "(or Chaplains)" after the words, "The Moderator's Chaplain" and the words "meeting of General" before the word "Assembly".
 - (b) In sub paragraph (d), remove the words "at the opening Communion service, and on" after "should the Moderator so determine, on" and "other" before the word "occasion."
 - (c) Add new sub paragraph (g) "accompanying the Moderator on official visits

- during the Moderator's term of office (at the Moderator's request);"
- (d) Add new sub paragraph (h) "keeping contact with the Moderator and the Moderator's family in a pastoral manner and providing care and spiritual direction as required;"
- (e) Add new sub paragraph (i) "undertaking such pastoral roles as the Moderator requires."
6. The Executive Commission amends the section of chapter 13 on the Church Office and Human Resources Committee as follows:
- (a) The name of the committee is amended in the title and in paras. 13.51. to 13.54. to "The Church Office and Human Resources Committee."
- (b) In para 13.51, the words "personnel management" in (a) are amended to "Human Resources" and in (b), the word "personal" are amended to "psychological."
- (c) In para 13.52, the sentence "The Committee is guided by the Human Resources Manual as adopted by the General Assembly." is added to the end of the paragraph.
7. The Executive Commission:
- (a) amends paragraph 16.7. by replacing it with para 16.7.1. "In South Africa and Zimbabwe, a Minister retires at the end of the month in which he/she reaches the normal Retirement Age of 65 years, unless otherwise provided for in the Rules of whichever Pension Fund to which she/he belongs. (See the Rules for ministers appointed in South Africa in Appendix C)
- Note:** The rules of the South African Fund provide for a Minister who was a member of the PCSA Pension Fund at 31 December 1999 to retire at the end of the month in which he/she reaches the age of 65 or 68 years and for a Minister who was a member of the RPCSA Pension Fund at 31 December 1999 to retire at the end of the month in which he/she reaches the age of 68 or 70 years.
- (b) adds paragraph 16.7.2, "16.7.2. A minister who is a member of the South African Fund or the Zimbabwean Fund may continue to serve after retirement on a contract basis until the end of the month in which he/she reaches the age of 70 years. The congregation approaches the Presbytery before the minister's normal retirement date with a proposal which must be approved by the Presbytery. In such cases, the minister may remain a member of the Pension Fund with contributions still being borne by both parties. The contract may not be extended beyond the end of the month in which the minister turns 70."
- (c) adds paragraph 16.7.3, "16.7.3. In terms of Zambian law, a Minister may retire at the end of the month in which he/she reaches 55 or thereafter up to the age of 60 years."
- (d) adds the line, "The appointment of a Retired minister may not extend that minister's tenure in the congregation from which she/he retired or extend a contract beyond the age of 70." to the end of paragraph 16.168.
- (e) adds the words, "serve as Stated Supply in the congregation from which she/he retired" to para 16.173 after the words, "No retired minister may" and before the words, "nor may she/he serve in any one Congregation for more than two years, unless no other alternative exists."

APPENDIX A

Chapter 20

THE SYNOD OF THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

Explanatory note

The General Assembly, recognising the special needs within Zambia, decided in 2013 that there was a need for a Synod to exercise a role representing the General Assembly within that sovereign State. Hence the Synod of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Zambia has been given opportunities to promote the proclamation of the Gospel and to oversee the life of the Church.

Section 1 - CONSTITUTION

- 20.1 The Synod of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Zambia is the Council of this Church representing the denomination in the Republic of Zambia.
- 20.2 The General Assembly of the former Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (PCSA) formed the Synod in Zambia in 1993, constituted it in January 1994, and the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) reconstituted it after the Union in 1999. It fixed its name and specified the Presbyteries that initially fell within its boundaries as follows: Copperbelt, Muchinga and Munale.
- 20.3 The General Assembly fixed the time and place of the Synod's first meeting and appointed a minister to convene and constitute the first meeting.
- 20.4 The members of the Synod in Zambia are:
 - (a) all the Ministers and Elders who are on the Rolls of all the Presbyteries within its boundaries and
 - (b) any Ministers and Elders whom adjoining Synods have duly appointed and commissioned as members of it. (See Manual of Faith and Order para 11.9.)
- 20.5 The General Assembly may add to the Synod any Minister or Elder of the Church, for specified purposes. Such Assessors have all the rights and privileges of members of the Synod for the term for which the General Assembly has appointed them.
- 20.6 A Session's commission to Presbytery also constitutes an Elder a member of the Synod and for the same period. No Elder may take his/her seat in the Synod, however, until
 - (a) the Clerk of Presbytery has certified to the Clerk of the Synod that the Presbytery has placed the Elder's name on its own Roll or
 - (b) the Session has commissioned the Elder to the Presbytery and the Synod and formally informed both Councils of this, and the Synod has received and approved the commission. The Session thus commissions an Elder to represent it on both the Presbytery and the Synod and in notifying them indicates that it has done this.

- 20.7 The Clerk of every Presbytery in the bounds of the Synod sends to the Clerk of the Synod a list of the names and addresses of the Elders whose commissions the Presbytery has received and approved. The Presbytery Clerk does this not later than two months after the end of the month in which General Assembly has a stated meeting or, in years when General Assembly has no stated meeting, not later than 1 August. The Presbytery Clerk advises the Clerk of the Synod without delay of any subsequent changes in the commissions. The Synod in Zambia may call for the production of the commission of any Elder if it so wishes.
- 20.8 The Synod may receive and approve the commission of an Elder from a Session or of a member from an adjoining Synod at any of its meetings, whether such meetings are ordinary, or special, or adjourned.
- 20.9 The Synod is entitled to appoint not more than one Minister and one Elder from within its boundaries to its adjoining Synods. It furnishes those appointed with commissions in due form. An adjoining Synod that receives and approves such a commission thereby constitutes the person appointed a member of that Synod for the period of the commission. Everyone so commissioned reports to the appointing Synod when he/she first attends the other Synod.
- 20.10 The Synod may associate with itself for the time being, with the right to speak but not to vote, any enrolled member of this Church, or any other Church, who is present at its meeting. No one may be associated when the Council is meeting in private (see Manual of Faith and Order para 14.16).
- 20.11 The Presidents of all recognised Church Fellowships are expected to attend Stated Meetings of the Synod with the right to speak but not to vote.
- 20.12 At its first constituted meeting, and thereafter at its first ordinary meeting after the meeting of the General Assembly, the first business of Synod must be:
- (a) to examine and adjust its Roll of members, and then
 - (b) to induct from among its members a Moderator.
- 20.13 At its last ordinary meeting before every ordinary meeting of the General Assembly the Synod appoints its Moderator-Designate for the ensuing two years.
- 20.14 During the Moderator's term of office the Synod may appoint him/her to visit the congregations within one of the Synod's constituent Presbyteries with a view to giving them advice and/or stimulating their interest in the life and work of the Church. The Moderator must report diligence to the Synod.
- 20.15 The Moderator is an ambassador of the Synod in Zambia and shall, insofar as possible, make visits to congregations, institutions, and regions of the Church in response to invitations. These visits are for the purpose of representing, strengthening and encouraging the Church, its people and its work.
- 20.16 The Synod appoints one or more Clerks to take its Minutes, keep its records, and perform such other duties as it assigns.
- 20.17 The Synod is entitled to assess the Congregations through its Presbyteries

within its boundaries for the funds necessary to carry out its duties. It bases the assessment on the annual income of the Congregation in a manner to be decided by the Synod.

- 20.18 The Synod appoints a Treasurer to take charge of its funds and to report to it thereon when required. It appoints also one or more Auditors to audit its accounts and report thereon.

Section 2 – OFFICE BEARERS

OFFICE BEARERS

- 20.19 The office bearers of the Synod shall be the Moderator, General Secretary (if Synod chooses to appoint), Clerk, Business Convener and Treasurer.

MODERATOR

- 20.20 The Synod elects a Moderator from among its members. He/she continues in office until a successor has been inducted.

Election and tenure of office

- 20.21 The term of office of the Moderator of the Synod shall be four years.
- 20.22 The election takes place at least three months before the first ordinary meeting of the Synod following the stated meeting of General Assembly but the Synod may decide at any time to call for an election of Office bearers.
- 20.23 The method of election of the Moderator is the same as that envisaged in Manual of Faith and Order paras 16.37-38.
- 20.24 The Moderator may only be elected to one terms of four years after which the Synod elects another Moderator.
- 20.25 If the Moderator is an Elder, Synod may grant him/her, while in office, authority to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in accordance with the prescribed services in the Service Book and Ordinal, subject to his/her satisfying the General Assembly's Ministry Committee as to his/her understanding of that Sacrament.

The authority and duties of the Moderator

- 20.26 The Moderator presides over the meetings of the Synod, takes precedence over its members, and acts officially on its behalf but is subject to the Synod in all matters and abides by and acts upon its decisions;
- 20.27 In the Synod meetings, the duties of the Moderator are
- (a) to constitute and conclude each meeting with prayer, or to conduct devotions;
 - (b) to decide who may speak at any time;
 - (c) to take the vote;
 - (d) to announce decisions;
 - (e) to moderate the discussion and keep order;
 - (f) to call on members to discharge any function which may have been or is

- assigned to them;
- (g) to see that business done has been duly recorded;
- (h) to sign the minutes;
- (i) in general, to speak and act officially in the name of the Synod as instructed by it.

- 20.28 An acting Moderator must so designate himself/herself when signing any records or documents of the Council.
- 20.29 The Moderator does not have a vote in determining the outcome of any proposal before the Synod other than if there is an exact (50/50) division among the members of the Synod who have voted, in which case he/she exercises a casting vote.
- 20.30 The Moderator speaks publicly in the name of the Synod whenever so instructed by the Synod. The Moderator may speak publicly after consultation with the Synod General Secretary (if appointed) and such other persons or Committees of the Church as are most closely involved with the subject matter being dealt with. If the Moderator expresses any personal opinion, it shall be clearly indicated that he/she is speaking in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the Church.
- 20.31 The Moderator may vacate the chair in favour of a former Moderator (or, if no former Moderator is present, another member of the Synod) should he/she wish to speak on any matter before the meeting. In such an event he/she has the normal voting rights of a member of the Synod.
- 20.32 The Moderator may attend and participate, without vote, in the meetings of all Committees of the Synod.
- 20.33 The Moderator shall be the official representative of the Church at gatherings and functions, both civic and ecclesiastical, to which the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) in Zambia is invited or at which it is to be represented, unless otherwise provided by the Synod. The Moderator may appoint a former Moderator or the Synod General Secretary to represent him/her at a specified gathering or function.
- 20.34 If the Moderator, through any cause, is unable to discharge his/her duties, the Previous Moderator or the most recent former Moderator available acts in his/her place. Should there be no Former Moderator available,
- (a) if Synod is sitting at the time, the Clerk calls upon members to choose a temporary Moderator, who shall hold office until the Moderator is able to resume his/her duties or a Former Moderator becomes available; and
 - (b) if the Synod is not sitting at the time, the Clerk, the General Secretary, the Business Convener and the Synod Treasurer, who are hereby authorised to act as a Special Committee, appoint a temporary Moderator whose period of office will be as mentioned in (a) above.

CLERK

- 20.35 At the meeting at which the Moderator is elected, the Synod elects a Clerk who holds office for the same period as the Moderator (note Manual of Faith and Order para 10.11 and 10.21), but may be re-elected for as many further periods as the Synod wishes. Synod may also appoint a Minute Clerk who, if not a member of the Council, has the right to speak but not to vote.

20.36 The Clerk

- (a) keeps the Roll of members;
- (b) brings before the Council all business entrusted to him/her;
- (c) minutes the proceedings of the Council;
- (d) takes charge of its records and papers;
- (e) gives extracts from its minutes to those entitled to them; and
- (f) discharges other duties laid on him/her by the Council.

TREASURER

20.37 At the same meeting at which the Moderator is elected, the Synod appoints a Treasurer who holds office for four years.

20.38 The Treasurer takes charge of the funds and accounts of the Synod and reports on them as required. The audited accounts of the Synod must be submitted annually at an ordinary meeting of the Synod.

SYNOD GENERAL SECRETARY

20.39 The Synod may appoint a General Secretary for such periods and on such conditions as the Synod may determine, provided that the first period may not exceed five years. If the Synod General Secretary is eligible for re-appointment, she/he may be appointed for one more period of five years. The General Secretary may be remunerated on either a full time or part time basis.

20.40 Provided they are either Ministers or Elders of the UPCSA, the office bearers of the Synod (Moderator, General Secretary (if appointed), Business Convenor, Clerk and the Treasurer) are members of Synod by virtue of being appointed to these offices.

Section 3 - FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

20.41 The Synod in Zambia

- (a) cannot legislate;
- (b) has oversight and authority over the Presbyteries, Sessions and congregations within its bounds but its rights may not infringe on those of the General Assembly or of Presbyteries and Sessions;
- (c) handles, orders, and/or corrects anything that any Council or party within its jurisdiction has omitted or done incorrectly, or raised, or that appears in Presbytery records;
- (d) may delegate specific powers and functions to the Presbyteries by consultation and agreement with the Presbytery / Presbyteries concerned.

20.42 The Synod:

- (a) exercises oversight and discipline over all Ministers, Probationers, Students for the Ministry, Church Development Evangelists, Lay Preachers and all other members of this Church within its boundaries, in consultation with its Presbyteries (see para 18.52);

- (b) represents the Church in Zambia on ecumenical Councils, in fraternal relationships, and in relationships with the State;
- (c) co-ordinates collaborative ministry between its Presbyteries, so as to assure effectiveness within its bounds;
- (d) takes responsibility for the placement of Probationers in Zambia, in consultation with Presbyteries;
- (e) takes part in Services of Ordination of ministers, with the Synod Moderator taking charge of the ordination element of the service and Presbytery Moderator leading the induction/introduction element, although Presbyteries decide on ordination of ministers within their bounds;
- (f) receives Ministers without charge certified to it by its Presbyteries and Ministers seconded by the General Assembly who reside within its boundaries. (Every seconded Minister or Probationer is required to be an enrolled member of a Congregation)
- (g) may review the minimum stipend within its boundaries and reports to the Mission and Discipleship Committee of General Assembly;
- (h) receives applications, through its Presbyteries, by Ministers within its boundaries for leave to retire from the active ministry and transmits the applications to the General Assembly with recommendations;
- (i) arranges the funeral services of ministers;
- (j) takes advantage of opportunities for Church development within the boundaries and originates or encourages the establishment of development work initiated by Sessions or Presbyteries;
- (k) arranges training for Church Development Evangelists and other leaders in various church roles;
- (l) appoints special times for penitence, intercession, or thanksgiving;
- (m) has oversight of all methods of fund-raising within its boundaries;
- (n) transmits to higher Councils of the Church overtures and petitions addressed to such Councils, and approaches such Councils by overtures and references;
- (o) gives public expression to its view on matters relating to the welfare of the people within its boundaries;
- (p) acts in all matters the General Assembly remits to it.

SYNOD'S AUTHORITY

20.43 Subject to the provisions of the preceding paragraphs the Synod has authority to deal with the following matters:

- (a) The general oversight and promotion of the life and work of the Church within its boundaries.
- (b) The power to supervise entitles the Synod to express disapproval of any recorded proceedings. It does not entitle it to reopen any matter that has been finalized or to require any other papers to be produced for it to examine in that connection.
- (c) It is the duty of every Presbytery within the Synod in Zambia to report the results of every unsatisfactory state process (See Manual of Faith

and Order 10.35–10.62) within its own boundaries to the Synod. If the Presbytery is unable to report satisfaction with the state of a Congregation and sees fit, it must report on the whole situation to the Synod.

It is the duty of Synod, whenever a Presbytery reports dissatisfaction, to appoint a Commission of the Synod:

- (i) to make further enquiry in consultation with Presbytery,
- (ii) to take such steps as it considers necessary to remedy the situation, and
- (iii) to report back to Synod.

The steps taken in (ii) above may, if the Synod considers it advisable, be in the form set out in paras 10.35-50 with the necessary changes.

- (d) Synod has jurisdiction to adjudicate on matters affecting the delimitation of areas within its boundaries.

Synod's Administrative Review Panel and Synod's Court

20.44 This Panel, acting within its jurisdiction, deals with applications for Reviews and Complaints (see Chapter 15). Synod's Court, acting within its jurisdiction, hears Appeals (see Manual of Faith and Order Chapter 18).

20.45 The Synod hears and disposes of Petitions (see Manual of Faith and Order Section 4 of Chapter 14) brought before it from Presbyteries, subject to the right of the General Assembly's Administrative Review Panel to review Synod's decisions.

20.46 The Synod makes such appointments to the Standing Committees of the General Assembly as that Council may provide for in its Standing Orders.

20.47 The Synod is entitled at its ordinary meetings to request reports from General Assembly Committees on their activities within its area. To that end it may at its own expense invite the Conveners or other members of such Committees to attend its meetings and report on their activities within its boundaries. It may also make such recommendations as it sees fit to such Committees.

20.48 The Synod transmits to the General Assembly any overture originating in itself or transmitted to it from or through a Presbytery.

20.49 The Synod calls for Presbytery records in order to examine and attest them and fixes the times by which Presbytery must deliver these to it. It takes such action as it deems necessary on the basis of such examination. The Moderator and Clerk of Synod sign Presbytery records to attest them.

20.50 If any matter requiring the urgent attention of Synod arises after the meeting of Synod and before the meeting of General Assembly, an Executive Commission or any other such body as that Synod may appoint shall act on behalf of Synod, subject to the provisions of Manual of Faith and Order para 13.8 with the necessary changes.

REVIEW BY, AND REPORTS TO, GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20.51 The Synod must submit its records to every ordinary meeting of the General

Assembly for examination and attestation and report on the following matters:

- (a) the name of its Moderator and Clerk;
 - (b) the time and place of its ordinary meeting(s);
 - (c) changes in the ministry within its boundaries during the period under report;
 - (d) the establishment, reduction, and/or dissolution of charges within its boundaries during the period under report;
 - (e) the creation of new charges within its boundaries, either by establishment or by the union or amalgamation of existing charges;
 - (f) any matter arising in any of its Presbyteries which requires to be dealt with by the General Assembly;
 - (g) the activities of its Administrative Review Panel and of its Court;
 - (h) the names of Ministers without charge and Ministers from other Churches who have been received by any of its Presbyteries during the period under any law of the Church;
 - (i) any other matters on which the General Assembly directs it to report.
- If the Synod desires to bring before the General Assembly any matters not covered by its report, it does so by overture or petition.

20.52 The Synod has the right to call on any of its Presbyteries to report to it on any matter on which the General Assembly requires it to report.

20.53 The Synod will usually nominate the Conveners of each of its Standing committees to serve on similar Standing Committees of the General Assembly so as to create direct collaboration between the committees of Assembly and their counterparts in Zambia. The Synod does however have the power to waive this convention if it so decides.

20.54 It is the duty of the Clerk of the Synod to forward its report to the Clerk of the General Assembly in terms of the Standing Orders of the General Assembly.

Section 3 - MEETINGS AND PROCEDURE

20.55 The Synod holds an ordinary meeting either as the General Assembly directs or as its own preceding ordinary meeting appoints.

20.56 The Synod holds two ordinary meetings a year, usually in September and March.

20.57 The Synod may appoint a special meeting. The rules governing such a meeting are the same as those applicable to Presbyteries.

20.58 The Moderator of the Synod, either on his/her own authority or on a requisition from at least a quorum of the Synod (defined in Manual of Faith and Order para 20.63 below), may convene a special meeting to deal with any business that appears to call for immediate decision.

20.59 At a special meeting of the Synod called by the Moderator the first business is to approve or disapprove of his/her action in convening the meeting. If this action is disapproved, no further business can be transacted at the

meeting. If his/her action is approved, no other business than that for which he/she convened the meeting can be transacted.

- 20.60 If the Moderator has ceased to be a member of the Synod or is for any other reason unable to act, his/her duties and responsibilities in convening a special meeting become those of the Clerk.
- 20.61 If the Moderator or the Clerk refuses to convene a special meeting after receiving a requisition in proper form to do so, the whole circumstances of the matter must be brought before the Synod at its next ordinary meeting for its judgement.
- 20.62 The Synod's Clerk must give 14 days' notice of every meeting of the Synod to all its members. Notices of any special meeting must state the business it will transact.
- 20.63 Every session of the Synod is opened and closed with prayer.
- 20.64 A quorum of the Synod consists of nine members representing at least two Presbyteries, of whom five must be Ministers and four Elders.
- 20.65 A quorum being present, the Moderator constitutes the meeting with prayer. If the Moderator is absent, a former Moderator or the senior Minister present constitutes the meeting.
- 20.66 The Synod is an open Council. It therefore meets in public, but it may sit in private if it considers it necessary or advisable to do so.
- 20.67 The Synod may appoint such Committees as it considers necessary to deal with, and to report on, matters within its jurisdiction, including a Business Committee to submit recommendations regarding the arrangement of its Agenda and the method of disposing of matters to be brought before the Synod.
- 20.68 The Synod appoints a Records Committee to examine and report on the records of the Presbyteries within its boundaries. The Synod prepares and submits to the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly a return showing its findings on its examination of Presbyterial records and on the visitation of Congregations by Presbyteries within their respective boundaries.
- 20.69 Any business proposed to be brought before a meeting of Synod, including notice of proposed overtures, must be intimated to the Clerk at least three weeks before the date of the meeting. The text of any overtures of which notice is given must appear on the notice calling the meeting.
- All documents and papers in connection with any business to be laid before the Synod must be in the hands of the Clerk at least ten days before the date of the meeting.
- 20.70 The same provisions for the keeping of Minutes apply to Synods as to Presbyteries and Sessions. (See Manual of Faith and Order paras 7.84-88.) The Synod is responsible to the General Assembly for the keeping of its records, which it must send up to that Council for examination and attestation at each ordinary meeting of the General Assembly, and which must be in the hands of the Clerk of the General Assembly not later than the first day on which that Council sits in its ordinary meeting. (See also Manual of Faith and Order para 14.2.)

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
NOMINATIONS REPRESENTATIVES TO EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

Amathole	Ms Nosipho Mdedetyana	F
Central Cape	Ms Nqabisa Mtshake	F
Copperbelt		
Drakensberg	Rev Madlala Nozinhle	F
DR Congo		
East Griqualand	Rev. Shona Van der Lingen	F
eGoli	Rev Christopher Judelsohn	M
Highveld	Rev Nelson Manabile	M
Lekoa	Rev Xolelwa Kobese	F
Limpopo	Rev Khonani Maselesele	M
M'chinga	Rev Edward Chirwa	M
Mthatha	Elder Nonkanyiso Ngqeleni	F
Munali	Rev Kennedy M'hone	M
Thekwini	Rev Sibusiso Zungu	M
Thukela	Ms KO Ngubane	F
Tiyo Soga Memorial	Rev. Peter Mpeke	M
Trans Xhariep	Rev C.M.M Letseleha	M
Tshwane	Mr Thabo Masete	M
Western Cape	Mr Malibongwe Gwele	M
Zimbabwe		

THE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION

Report to the Executive Commission 2024

Introduction

General Assembly 2023 resolved to constitute a Standing Commission in terms of para. 13.1 (a) of the Manual of Faith and Order and to name it the "Assembly Standing Commission". The same General Assembly also resolved that the Assembly Standing Commission's membership shall be as follows: The Moderator of General Assembly (as Chair), the Immediate Former Moderator, the Moderator Designate, the General Secretary, the Clerk of Assembly (as Secretary), The General Treasurer, three ministers and three elders elected by every General Assembly through the normal nomination process. The term of office of the Standing Commission shall be for period between meetings of General Assembly.

The following are the members: The Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe, Rev Siphon Mtetwa, Rev Dr Amon Kasambala, Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, Rev Vusi Mkhungo, Mr Ryan Johnson, Rev Dr George Marchinkowski, Rev Jane Nyirongo, Rev Boitumelo Gaborone, Mr Augustice Stuurman, Ms Nkosithandile Mbense and Mr Welsh Linqa.

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor the strategic plan of the UPCSA as provided and agreed upon by the General Assembly.
2. To ensure that Assembly committees and Presbyteries are actively aligning themselves with the strategic plan of the UPCSA.
3. To monitor and evaluate the implementation of decisions of the General Assembly.
4. To monitor and seek to promote the smooth functioning of Presbyteries.
5. To address and attend to situations where information is received that a Presbytery might be in an unsatisfactory state (as per the provisions of the Manual of Faith and Order).
6. To attend to urgent business that may arise between the meetings of the General Assembly or Executive Commission. Such business includes the following:
 - (a) Developments that may impact adversely the workings of the UPCSA such as changes in the political and socioeconomic space;
 - (b) Developments that may bring challenges to the sitting of the General Assembly (e.g. The recent Covid-19 pandemic);
 - (c) Responses to issues that may be raised by the ecumenical movements that the UPCSA is affiliated with (in consultation with the Ecumenical Relations committee);
 - (d) Nominations of a UPCSA member to serve in senior positions in ecumenical movements (in consultation with the Ecumenical Relations Committee) or appointments at a Theological Faculty where the UPCSA is a partner (in consultation with the Ministry Committee). These appointments must be reported in full to the subsequent sitting of the General Assembly or Executive Commission.
7. To approve Public Statements on the position of the UPCSA on issues of political, economic, social, and spiritual importance (in consultation with Church in Society or other appropriate Assembly Committee).

Meetings

To date the Commission has met four times. The first meeting held on the 25th of October 2023 was meant for the following:

- For the members to know each other.
- Understanding the powers and responsibilities of the Commission as enshrined in the Manual of Faith and Order Chapter 13 Section 1 and 13.15 as well as Appendix A of the Manual Committee report to the GA item.
- Terms of Reference.
-

At the second meeting, the Commission invited the four Committee Conveners whose work will have a direct impact on the work of the Commission,

1. **Priorities and Resources Committee.** This is where we discussed the role of the P&R Committee in supporting the work of the Church, in the implementation of General Assembly decisions, the implementation of the UPCSA's strategic plan, the development of a monitoring instrument to track progress and the importance of gender inclusivity.
2. **Manual Committee.** The Convener of the Manual Committee wanted to understand and get clarity on the role of the Manual Committee in the transnationality conversation. It was agreed the role of the Manual Committee is to guide structural considerations and institutionalization of the recommendations that will come up from Presbyteries as well as providing expert advice on various matters including the implications of structuring Synods differently.
3. **Church in Society.** The Convener presented the challenges faced by the Committee, including engaging members from Zimbabwe and Zambia and the need for a more relevant strategic plan to tackle issues such as gender and racial inequality.
4. **Finance Committee.** The Convener of the Finance Committee presented the financial situation of the denomination, expressing concern over a deficit of about 1.5 million rands for the first four months of the financial year. He outlined plans to communicate with congregations about the importance of contributions. He further shared with the Commission the financial strain that the South African Pension Fund was placing on the UPCSA, with between 12 and 15 Ministers not contributing, costing between R40 000 to R50 000 a month. He also spoke on the formation of a Business Unit overseen by the Rev Dr Peter Langerman. The Commission suggested the creation of a task team to assist Dr. Langerman in this unit. These will be covered in full in the report of the Finance Committee to this Executive Commission.

The Assembly Standing Commission has been receiving a number of requests from congregations and Presbyteries for intervention and relevant advice and solutions have been provided to those. Members are committed to carry out the mandate given to them.

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the work carried out by the Assembly Standing Commission.
3. The Executive Commission encourages Presbyteries to familiarize themselves with the workings of the Assembly Standing Commission.

**SERVICE
AND
WITNESS
CLUSTER**

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE

THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

REPORT OF THE ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE (ERC) TO THE 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

1. The 2023 General Assembly appointed the following members to serve as the General Assembly ERC: Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe (Moderator), Rev Dr Amon Kasambala (Moderator Designate), Rev Prof Fundiswa Kobo, Rev Mautji Pataki, Rev Craig Morrison, Rev Thomson Mkandawire, Rev Wayne van Heerden, Rev Zwai Mtyhobile, Rev Vusi Mkhungo, Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, Ms Samkeliso Siwela, Ms Karabo Mamabolo II and Ms Afika Babazile Rwayi.

2. The ERC operates in accordance with the terms of reference that were adopted by the 2012 General Assembly. For the period under review, the ERC set for itself the following goals:

- 2.1 Promote local ecumenism.
- 2.2 Promote healthy dialogue on ecumenism at all levels.
- 2.3 Participate meaningfully in ecumenical forums.
- 2.4 Manage relationships, partnerships, cooperation, and unity talks.
- 2.5 Management of affiliations and participation in the ecumenical councils/ bodies.

3. This report presents the life and work of the ERC over the period from July 2023 to 31 March 2024. It covers aspects of ecumenism in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. It moves on to cover issues coming from the ecumenical bodies that the UPCSA is affiliated with, including the Council for World Mission, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Africa Communion of Reformed Churches, All Africa Conference of Churches, and World Council of Churches. Lastly, the report will cover performance with partners.

4. The Committee established task teams to address the issues covered by the ecumenical forums as follows:

- a. CWM: Prof Kobo, Ms Siwela, Rev Mkandawire
- b. WCRC/ACRC: Rev Brown, Rev Morrison, Ms Mamabolo II
- c. AACC/WCC: Rev Pataki, Ms Rwayi, Rev Van Heerden

5. The ERC held three meetings over the period as follows: 15 August 2023, 5 December 2023, and 6 March 2024.

ECUMENISM AT NATIONAL SPHERES

ZAMBIA

6. The Synod of Zambia brought the following political, economic, moral, and social issues affecting the nation, which the church in Zambia is concerned about:

- 6.1 **Political Environment.** A serene and conducive political environment is the hallmark of human society. The Synod of Zambia in conjunction with the other denominations in the country have acknowledged the good intentions by the

Government to bring sanity to the political landscape in the Nation by curbing political violence. However, the Synod observed with great concern the **shrinking democratic space**. Human rights, such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, are arbitrarily being trampled on, especially against those considered to hold dissenting political views or persons belonging to opposition political parties. Intimidation of media houses by state institutions, based on the guests they invite, and the content discussed on their platforms, curtails both media freedom and free speech. This practice also sends an indirect message to media houses to stay away from discussing uncomfortable but very important topics of public interest and to shun or marginalize certain voices whose views may be deemed as unfavourable to those in authority. The right to peaceful assembly is a fundamental liberty that sustains the activities of political parties and civil society groups in constitutional democracies. On several occasions, however, the police have denied opposition parties the opportunity to exercise this crucial right on the grounds of lack of adequate manpower and unspecified security concerns. There is also a growing selective application of the rule of law. For instance, it has become a tradition for the police to arrest members of the opposition in a violent manner, keep them in detention longer than necessary, and never take their cases to court, long after being finally released on bond. All these serve as examples of undemocratic practices that fall far short of the respect for civil and political rights that the Constitution obliges the State to uphold.

6.2 **Economic Situation.** We have noted with appreciation the good will by the government to restructure the economy to create an enabling environment for the development of our country. The government has made notable strides to restructure the national debt. These efforts are commendable. However, government has not been transparent in the whole process. They have not given full disclosure of all bilateral and multilateral agreements. They have also not been transparent in publication of the mining agreements with investors so that the Zambian people know what their public leaders are signing on their behalf.

6.2.1 **High Cost of Living.** Both the exchange rate and inflation have risen considerably in recent months and these trends are adversely affecting the economy. Consequently, the cost of living and doing business have escalated. While we commend the Government for the Zambia National Service mealie meal initiative that has seen the price of the commodity slightly reduced in some areas. Unfortunately, the price is still too high for the majority ordinary Zambians. The Government needs to identify the root cause of the high mealie meal prices and put in place effective measures that would reduce the prices to ones that even the poor can afford. Like water, food is life.

6.2.2 **Agriculture.** In the spirit of economic diversification, agriculture in Zambia can play a big role in job creation both at small and large-scale farming and can guarantee food security. Food security produces a wide range of positive impacts including economic growth and poverty reduction. Farming Input Support Programme (FISP) can help many of our small-scale farmers. However, this programme has not been free from abuse. In pursuit of improving the same, there seems to be little engagement nor prior preparation with beneficiaries being removed from the programme. We believe it is the duty of Government to be more engaging whenever a new course of action is being undertaken. If handled well this

support programme can help to reduce poverty at household level and improve food security in Zambia.

6.3 **Moral Issues - Use of Social Media.** Social media is here to stay and the benefits it has come with are numerous. However, we bemoan the abuse of this tool of communication. We are particularly concerned with the use of vulgar language which goes undeterred. We believe the church and government need to call upon every citizen to responsible use of social media and that the statutory bodies responsible to be vigilant and enforce laws related to the same.

6.4 **Centenary Celebration.** The Synod informed the ERC of the glorious week they had at David Livingstone Memorial Presbyterian Church, Livingstone from 22 to 26 November 2023, where and when they were celebrating the 100 years of God's Grace, Impartation, Evangelism and Discipleship (EBENEZER 1 Samuel 7:12). The General Assembly Moderator, the Rt. Rev Lydia Neshangwe graced the occasion leading to the grand finale that saw the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Her Honour Madam Mutale Nalumango joining the Sunday Service/worship. The General Assembly Moderator, the General Assembly Moderator Designate, and the Clerk of the Assembly blessed the Synod immensely with their presence and messages. Fraternal delegates coming from PC(USA), Liaison Officer for Eastern and Central Africa, ROCK of Africa Missions USA, Presbyterian Church of South Korea, Council of Churches in Zambia, Zambia Anglican Church, and Local churches in Livingstone were also in attendance. Members of the UPCS, Synod of Zambia also travelled from far and near.

7. The Synod of Zambia was truly strengthened and was commissioned by the Rt Rev Neshangwe to take the next leg of the Lord's mission under the following guide: Vision Statement: "To be a viable missional Church in Zambia" (Luke 4:18-19) Mission Priorities:
a) To bring souls to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19-20).
b) To disciple believers in love, faith and hope (1 Corinthians 13:13).
c) To proclaim social justice for all.
d) To be a self-sustaining missional church.

8. The occasion was truly momentous and has left an indelible mark on the Synod of Zambia to be remembered many years to come. The Synod of Zambia continues to celebrate God's grace and faithfulness and the privilege to be part of the UPCS.

9. It should be noted that parts of the feedback from the Synod belong to the Church in Society Committee. They were forwarded to that Committee with an encouragement that they should be considered in their meetings.

ZIMBABWE

10. The Presbytery of Zimbabwe presented a report on the following matters relevant to national ecumenism:

10.1 Summit

10.1.1 The Summit, inclusive of the participants from the Presbytery of Denver and the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, was held in two different modes.

10.1.1.1 The first was a tour of strategic sites within the Presbytery of Zimbabwe to witness where work has been done through the efforts of the Partnership and particularly in pursuing the resolutions of the 2009 Summit. Summit participants met in Bulawayo on Friday 16 June 2023. The participants visited Gloag Farm on Saturday 17 June 2023. Due to flight delays the tour of Vimridge was deferred to Sunday afternoon. There was a worship service held on Sunday 18 June 2023 at Robert Sinyoka Primary School which was followed by the Vimridge tour in the afternoon. Partner delegates to the Summit had a chance to have fellowship with all Bulawayo church ministers over dinner on the same day. Monday 19 June 2023 was spent on travel to Harare and then followed by a tour of the Lomagundi Clinic in Chinhoyi on Tuesday 20 June 2023.

10.1.1.2 Secondly, on Wednesday 21 June 2023, it was a day of discussion on the way forward in working together as Presbyteries in Partnership. The Conveners of Central Fund, Health and Wellness and Church in Society did attend the Summit and presented how their committees benefitted from the Partnership.

10.1.2 **Central Fund.** The partners have shown interest in continuing to support Central Fund. We will soon be starting 'Conversation Together – Presbytery of Zimbabwe and Presbytery of Denver'.

10.1.3 **Long Leave.** Appreciation was expressed on the long leave programme which benefited some ministers. On the 22nd of June 2023, two of the Denver delegates visited the American Embassy to meet with an official there and discuss ways in which the visa application process by future delegates from Zimbabwe to Denver can be safeguarded and enhanced. This could not be concluded at the Summit.

10.1.4 **Delegates Review / Feedback on visiting the Presbytery of Zimbabwe sites**

- a) The size of the group was good and ideal.
- b) Travelling as a group was good.
- c) The reception was warm.
- d) WhatsApp Group formed made communication easy. It helped a lot especially when there were flight delays.
- e) Appreciation was extended for the extra effort put in hosting the visitors amid preparations for the General Assembly.
- f) Gift presentation from the PZDP to PoZ.

10.1.5 **Review of the Memorandum of Understanding**

- a) It was noted that 2023 marks 20 years since the first conversation was held between leaders of the two Presbyteries to explore possibility of a formal Partnership. Those conversations emanated into the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2005. Since then, the practise has been for the two Presbyteries to review the MOU after every five years.
- b) Review was due in 2020 but it was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This 2023 Summit will review the MOU in light of the many changes that have occurred over the years as well as those anticipated to occur in the life and work of the Presbyteries.
- c) What goes without saying is that the MOU was put together many years before the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted so many things such that effort is needed to create the necessary mutual understanding and agreement of how

to relate going forward. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed us to embrace Information technology as a critical vehicle in the Partnership. This has become a blessing as well as an affliction particularly as relations are concerned. There are ethical issues, cyber security risks, as well as inequality concerns that any Partnership needs to address in order to develop necessary strategies to maintain healthy relations.

- d) The Summit therefore reflected on how the resolution as well as the direction and purpose for journeying together in Partnership in the 'new normal' proved to be an effective way going forward.
- e) The MOU document was shared with all the participants before the Summit to enable informed review.
- f) After a lengthy discussion regarding the link between the Presbytery of Denver's partnerships structures vis-à-vis Presbytery of Zimbabwe's, certain disparities were noted. It was therefore resolved that the Presbytery of Zimbabwe's ERC should meet and discuss on the noted disparities emanating from the structural changes in the Presbytery of Denver that affect corresponding structures in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. The ERC would report and make recommendations to the next Presbytery of Zimbabwe Council Meeting.

10.2 **URC Partnership Update**

10.2.1 Twinning with congregations in Presbytery of Zimbabwe, Mbare, Highfield, Budiriro and Njube. Four-year monthly funding from the URC Eastern Synod to help with Presbytery of Zimbabwe funding. Funds not stipulated but left at the discretion of the Presbytery based on needs.

10.2.2 Long leave was not concluded since the Synod had asked a representative who was on sabbatical and had visited Paraclete on his own personal capacity.

10.3 **Ecumenical Institutions / bodies**

10.3.1 Zimbabwe Council of Churches. The Presbytery paid the subscription that were owing to Zimbabwe Council of Churches, further amount will be paid in due course.

- a. It is also encouraging to note that apart from these members who were nominated to serve on the said ZCC Commissions from our Presbytery, the Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe serves as the Chairperson of the ZCC Advisory Board. The Presbytery Moderator also serves on the Supervisory Board.
- b. The Presbytery was invited to nominate two choirs from our Presbytery to represent it at the Ecumenical Choral Music Festival to be held on Saturday 2 December 2023, at Kentucky Hotel, Harare. The invitation was extended to choirs based in Harare, Mbare and Highfield UPCSA.

10.3.2 Christian Care. The Presbytery owes Christian Care USD400 in subscriptions. Christian Care held their National Annual General meeting on Saturday 22 April 2023. New Executive Committee was elected.

10.3.3 CCAP and UCCSA. The Presbytery continues to share the Evangelists training with CCAP, 2023 class programme is run by the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. Nothing is happening with UCCSA.

SOUTH AFRICA

11. **SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SACC).** Ecumenism in South Africa is covered by and large in the programmes and activities of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). In the year under review, the SACC has been busy with, among others, the following activities:

11.1 Journeying with the Palestinian Christians.

11.2 Intervention in the Cape Town taxi debacle.

11.3 Ensuring that South Africa's nation and provincial elections are free and fair.

12. The SACC held its annual Central Committee in November 2023. The UPCS was represented by the past Moderator of the General Assembly - Rev SJ Mtetwa, General Secretary - Rev Dr Mpetsheni, FOW President - Mrs Bosiki, and FOY President - Mr Mampane. The Calvin Protestant Church of South Africa was granted full membership status. In the course of 2024, a triennial Conference will be held.

13. **CHURCH UNITY COMMISSION (CUC).** CUC continues with its efforts to promote church unity. As part of the work of the CUC, the meetings to discuss the relevance and implications of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of justification (JDDJ) are being held. The Presbyteries are encouraged to factor the contents of the processes in their programmes.

ECUMENICAL FORUMS

COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION (CWM)

14. The CWM is focusing on hosting its General Assembly in Mhlanga, Durban on 12-19 June 2024. The UPCS will be represented by the Rev Zwai Mtyhobile, Ms Samkeliso Siwela, Mr Lawrence Makani and Ms Afrika Rwayi. The theme of the Assembly is Rise to life: Together in transformation. Feedback on the Assembly will be presented verbally when this report will be presented at the Executive Commission.

15. By the time the Executive Commission meets, there will have been four meetings of the Board of Directors, August 2023, November 2023, February 2024 and May 2024. The business of the CWM that is taken care of by the Board of Directors includes the following:

15.1 Preparations for the Assembly in June. The Assembly will be preceded by the meetings of the Women, the Youth and the Annual Members Meeting (AMM). At the coming Assembly a new Board of Directors will be established through the election of the two officials - Moderator and Treasurer, and the appointment of Directors. Thus, the Moderator will finish her four-year term with distinction.

15.2 The implementation of The Onesimus Project (TOP). There are four components of TOP, namely Legacies of Slavery, Modern Day Slavery, Education for Transformation and Liberation, and Transformative Ecumenism. The funding guidelines have been shared with the churches. Funds have been allocated on each of the components and the member churches are encouraged to apply for funds from the components that are relevant and applicable to their situations. The

UPCSA Assembly Standing Commission (ASC) has commissioned a study to identify and apply for the funds.

15.3 Reflections on the Israel/Palestine Matter. The Board expressed their solidarity with the people who are directly affected by the situation of the Israel/Hamas war. The CWM issued a statement titled, "CWM Demands Immediate Ceasefire in Palestine, Restoring Peace with Justice". As the CWM GS wrote in his report, "The Board collectively affirmed the CWM's stance expressed through the statement in the light of CWM's commitment to resisting the life-denying forces and affirm life, justice, and peace for the oppressed. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to continue to read the signs of times and provide the missiological approach, especially on the ongoing conflict in Gaza."

15.4 CWM continues to strengthen ties with the WCRC for mission and witness. A renewed MOU has been signed between the two bodies. It is envisaged that, through the MOU, the WCRC will be enabled "to continue its active engagement with the ecumenical movement and its members to further the interests of economic, ecological and gender justice, as well as work in the areas of peace and reconciliation until further review in 2025" (CWM GS in his report).

16. The CWM convened a meeting of all the General Secretaries of the member churches. That meeting is held every second year to align the member churches and the CWM. It services to apprise the General Secretaries of the developments that are taking place and for the CWM to hear from the member churches their concerns and advice on the route that CWM should be taking.

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WCRC)

17. **Global Reformed Advocacy Platforms for Engagement (GRAPE).** The GRAPE programme is gaining momentum. The South Africa team identified the missional programme on the provision of the Basic income Grant (BIG). The team has established links with many other formations that pursue the same interest. The Churches are urged to follow and support this initiative as it is about economic justice. The Kenyan team works on the provision of safe drinkable water.

18. **WCRC Executive Committee.** The WCRC Executive Committee will hold its meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan in May 2024. The outcomes of the meeting will be shared verbally at the Assembly.

19. **WCRC General Council.** The General Council will be held in Thailand in 2025. The great event that will be observed at the Council will be the 1700th year of the Council of Nicaea. The Executive Commission should remind the ABC to include in the 2025 UPCSA General Assembly a slot to reflect on this development and the Doctrine Committee to facilitate reflections on the Nicene creed, as a way of reasserting the relevance of the Nicene Creed in the life of the church.

AFRICA COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (ACRC)

20. The Council of the ACRC was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 23 November 2023. The UPCSA was represented by the General Secretary – Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, Ms

Samkeliso Siwela, and Ms Afika Rwayi. The theme was, "More Than Conquerors Through Christ who Loves us" Romans 8:37.

21. The participants were taken through the four strategic verbs of the WCRC:
 Discerning – united in prayer led by the Holy Spirit
 Confessing – take a stand on the moment of Truth
 Witnessing – what we are saying in our stand
 Being Reformed – always reforming according to the will of God

22. The Council resolved to continue with the ACRC strategic plan for another five-year period and it is as follows:

The ACRC Strategic Plan Areas

Serial No	KEY FOCUS AREAS	Person(s) Responsible
	a	b
1	Gender Justice	Rev Dr Fonki
2	Peace Making	Rev Dr Gama
3	Economic and Ecological Justice	Rev Dr Mpetsheni
4	Overcoming Racism and Affirming the Rights of Indigenous People	Rev P Mwaura
5	Refugees and Internally Displaced People	Rev Wanjala
6	Youth Development	Ms Afika Rwayi and Adv Tibonge Ng'ambi
7	Theology	Rev Dr Onwunta

23. The outcome of the elections was as follows:

Rev Dr Uma Agwu Onwunta – President from Nigeria
 Rev Pauline Kanuthu Mwaura – Vice President from Kenya
 Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni – Regional Secretary from South Africa
 Mr M Koku Mawulikplimi AMEGA – Treasurer from Togo

Sub Regions appointed the following as Coordinators who also serve in the committee:

Mrs Paulina Afful-Arthur – West Africa from Ghana
 Rev Wanjala Martin – Eastern Africa from Kenya
 Rev Dr Billy Gama – Southern Africa from Malawi

Ms Afika Rwayi - Youth Representative

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES (AACC)

24. The 12th General Assembly of the AACC was held in Abuja, Nigeria on 19-23 November 2023. It was preceded by the 9th Theological Institute which Ms Bamanye Vokwana from the UPCSA and numerous young theologians from across Africa attended from November 7th to 16th. The institute aimed to empower young theologians through lectures, discussions, and activities, fostering their commitment to building a theologically sound Africa driven by the love of Christ. There were also pre-women and youth meetings from November 16th to 18th, with Afika Rwayi representing the youth and Samkeliso

Siwela and Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe as women delegates. Both programs were executed successfully, concluding with the launch of the 16 Days of Activism by the Women's Preassembly.

25. At the Assembly, the UPCSA was represented by the Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe, Rev. Dr. Lungile Mpetsheni, Ms. Samkeliso Siwela and Ms. Afika Babazile Rwayi. The General Assembly commenced with the 60th Anniversary Celebrations, featuring messages of support and congratulations from various ecumenical partners and the WCC general Secretary - Rev. Prof Jerry Pillay as the keynote speaker for the event. The theme of the Assembly was "The Love of Christ Compels Us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). The main events to mark the order of service for the 60th Anniversary included the following:

- Keynote Speaker Rev Dr Jerry Pillay – General Secretary, World Council of Churches
- Voice of women (we sang a song entitled "Sing a song for women everywhere" and special rendition by Mrs Juanita Asade
- Voices from Youth (there speech presented by the youngest youth) and special rendition by New Life for All group
- Cutting of the Anniversary Cake

26. The highlight of the Assembly for the UPCSA and Southern Africa region was the election of the UPCSA Moderator, Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe as the President of the AACC for a period of five years (up to 2028). Congratulations have been conveyed to her.

27. The assembly covered a wide range of topics including migration and human trafficking, health and healing, unsustainable population growth, gender justice, youth unemployment, inclusion of persons with disabilities, climate change, xenophobia, violence, unconstitutional changes of governments, lack of trust in public institutions, declining space for civil society organizations, corruption, illicit financial flows, extractive industries, poor governance, misleading theologies, and ethnicity and tribalism. Additionally, issues such as faith and science, sustainable families, debt crisis, church and community transformation, Pan Africanism, and ethical investments were addressed.

28. The following resolutions were taken, among others:

1. African Patriotism:

- Support youth participation in the "Africa My Home, Africa My Future" campaign.
- Advocate for investing in and empowering young people for economic viability.

2. Justice and Peace:

- Monitor early warning signs of conflicts and engage in peace programs.
- Address the impact of armed conflicts on women and children.
- Engage the African Union on unconstitutional changes of government, democracy, and visa-free movement.

3. Human Rights:

- Continue work on human rights, including supporting the capacities of Member Churches.

4. Advocacy at the African Union:

- Represent faith-based organizations in advocacy at the African Union.
- Advocate for agenda 2063, silencing the guns, a visa-free Africa, and engage in global agendas.

5. Ecumenical Formation and Theology:

- Recognize the connection between evangelism and ecumenism.
- Refute false theologies and participate in theological discussions.
- Launch a master's program for training theologians and leaders.

6. Creation Care, Environment, and Climate Change:

- Accept the Africa Faith Actors Network for Climate Justice.
- Move from discussing creation care to practical implementation.
- Explore the link between environmental protection, food security, and alternative energy sources.
- Incorporate climate change curriculum in educational institutions.

7. Sexual-Gender Based Violence and Gender Justice:

- Adopt the Anti-GBV campaign and focus on the family unit.
- Take a comprehensive strategy involving various stakeholders.
- Speak out against institutionalized prejudice and mistreatment of women.

8. Migration and Trafficking in Persons:

- Respond to migration and trafficking in persons, emphasizing prevention and survivor support.
- Address migration challenges with a family unit dimension.

9. Sustainable Population:

- Examine the theology of reproduction and its impact on climate change.
- Consider humans as part of creation rather than above it.

10. Ethical Leadership:

- Target youth for ethical leadership curriculum.
- Nurture coaching and mentorship programs for the young.
- Take up the AACC Ecumenical leadership Masters Programme.

11. Persons with Disabilities:

- Promote disability studies in theological seminaries.
- Attract people with disabilities into ordained ministry.
- Support people with disabilities in self-employment.

12. Church and Community Transformation:

- Establish active holistic development/diakonia departments.
- Focus on teaching youth values of excellence.
- Prioritize Christian transformation starting with the family.

13. Deepening a Culture of Peace in Africa:

- Use the pulpit to preach peace.
- Raise a prophetic voice and engage in mediation and reconciliation initiatives.

14. Economic Justice and Debt Crisis:

- Advocate for economic justice and UN tax convention.
- Engage church leaders in advocating for the UN Tax convention.
- Localize the Zecheous tax campaign.

- Recognize and address new debt crises in Africa.

15. Ecological Justice:

- Continue raising the voice of faith actors on climate justice.

16. Pan Africanism and Faith:

- Deepen Pan African partnership with mutual representation and leadership engagement.
- Call for policies supporting smallholder farmers and climate change adaptation.
- Promote a Pan African and Pan African Women of Faith lens in theological education.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

29. The WCC has taken a giant step to intervene in the Israel/Palestine as the WCC general Secretary and his team held a meeting with the President of Israel to negotiate truce in the Holy Land. That is commendable for a world body of churches.

BILATERAL RELATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS

20. The ERC strives to maintain cordial relations with the partners. The following activities are worth a mention:

30.1 **Church of Scotland General Assembly.** The Rt Rev KL Neshangwe represented the UPCSA at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 2023.

30.2 **Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly.** The PC(USA) will hold its General Assembly in June 2024. The Rev SJ Mtetwa, accompanied by Mrs Mtetwa will represent the UPCSA at the Assembly.

CONCLUSION

31. The UPCSA holds a high profile in the ecumenical space. We thank the men and women of the UPCSA who participate in different forums as representatives of the denomination. They fly the flag of the denomination high as they are, in many situations, identified, elected and/or appointed to assume certain roles in those bodies.

32. The ERC is gifted with women and men who are so dedicated to their work. The Committee managed to meet all its targets, due to that dedication. Their efforts have always been noticed. We pray that God will bless them.

33. The ministers and leadership are encouraged to follow the developments that are taking place at the ecumenical space and strive to help the UPCSA to be ecumenically friendly at all the levels, especially congregational and presbyterial levels.

Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni
Convener

PROPOSAL

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes the issues that the church in Zambia is concerned about;
 - b. requests the Church in society Committee to take care of the issues from Zambia that fall in the Committee's domain, namely political, economic and moral issues; and

- c. congratulates the Synod of Zambia on holding the centenary celebrations successfully
3. The Executive Commission commends the Presbytery of Zimbabwe for managing ecumenical relationships so diligently nationally and with the Presbytery of Denver of the PC(USA) and the Eastern Synod of the United Reformed Church.
4. The Executive Commission notes the activities of the SACC with appreciations.
5. The Executive Commission encourages the Presbyteries in South Africa to study, internalise and implement the contents of the CUC and JDDJ in their programmes.
6. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that the CWM will hold its Assembly in Durban on 12-19 June 2024; and
 - b. notes the issues pertaining to the life and work of the CWM.
7. The Executive Commission notes that the Assembly Standing Commission (ASC) has commissioned a study to identify and apply for the funds.
8. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that the WCRC Executive Committee will hold its meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan in May 2024;
 - b. notes that the WCRC General Council will be held in Thailand in 2025; and
 - c. notes that the WCRC General Council will meet in a year in which the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea will be observed.
9. The Executive Commission
 - a. reminds the ABC to include in the 2025 UPCSA General Assembly a slot to reflect on this development; and
 - b. reminds the Doctrine Committee to facilitate reflections on the Nicene creed, as a way of reasserting the relevance of the Nicene Creed in the life of the church.
10. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that the Council of the ACRC was held in Abuja, Nigeria on 23 – 26 November 2023;
 - b. notes the strategic plan of the ACRC; and
 - c. notes the outcome of the elections (the Executive Committee until 2023).
11. The Executive Commission
 - a. notes that the General Assembly of the AACC was held in Abuja, Nigeria on 19 – 23 November 2023;
 - b. notes that the Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe was elected as the first woman President of the AACC for five years (2023 – 2028);
 - c. congratulates the Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe on her election;
 - d. notes the resolutions of the Assembly; and
 - e. encourages the respective committee to harvest from the resolution the aspects that may be relevant to their work and the General Secretary to assist by distributing such relevant resolutions to the relevant committees.
12. The Executive Commission notes the giant step taken by the WCC to intervene in the Israel/Palestine situation.
13. The Executive Commission notes that
 - a. the Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe represented the UPCSA at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 2023.
 - b. the Rev SJ Mtetwa, accompanied by Mrs Mtetwa will represent the UPCSA at the General Assembly of the PC(USA) that will be held in June 2024.

**REPORT OF THE JOINT UNION COMMISSION UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA/UNITING
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
(UPCSA/UCCSA) TO THE 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (UPCSA)**

Members

Convener: Rev N Gordon, General Secretary: Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, Rev Dr David Mushayavanhu, Rev Melanie Cook, Rev Patricia Phiri, Rev Dr Victor Letuka, Ms Gloria Spelman, Ms Naume Somo, CFC Rev Thabani Masikane, Rev Talkmore Chilanga, Rev Nkululeko Nojoko, Rev Heidi Petersen.

The Commission held the first meeting on the 23rd of August 2023 via Zoom. The second meeting was held on the 25th of October 2023 also via Zoom.

Discussions at both these meetings were about what has been done already concerning Union talks. The Commission agreed that an extensive amount of work has been done. Several issues are causing a halt in further discussions. Covid also contributed to this.

Everyone agreed that a key person to guide and lead us on the next step would be the Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni. The General Secretary was unable to attend our first meeting due to previous commitments. The General Secretary joined our meeting on the 25th of October 2023. That meeting concluded that the Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni would write a letter to the General Secretary of the UCCSA. The Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni wrote 2 letters to the General Secretary of the UCCSA dated the 25th of October 2023 and 3rd of April 2024.

The General Secretary, the Rev Ndebele, has not responded to either of these letters. We wait for a response from the General Secretary of the UCCSA. The second letter was written a day before this report was compiled.

I commend the Commission members who were willing and eager to attend the meetings. Their enthusiastic participation and knowledge of information contributed to a good working progress and willingness to actively live and experience that we are truly 'Stronger Together'.

Proposals:

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

ETHICS AND DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION OF 2024

Members: Rev Rory Spence (Convener), Revs Biggie Msusa (Zimbabwe), Judith Mkandawire (Zambia), Phindile Nqakwana, Bulelani Mandiyase, James Lungu (Zambia), Charles Magagane and Dr Allan Nyoni. Elders Mrs Kalipa Qaba, Advocate Sharon Mthimunye, Ms Fezekile Mtete, Mr Kevin Bestwick, and Mr Lucky Dinake.

Formation:

Since there were no terms of reference in existence for this Ethics Committee, we were advised by the Clerk of Assembly to formulate terms of reference for the committee and forward it to the **Priorities and Resources Committee** for approval, which we did. A truncated version of our mandate and terms of reference was recently returned to our committee, and it has now been approved by us.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The only issue referred to this committee by the **Church in Society Committee (CIS)** at the 2023 General Assembly was the issue of '**Blessing of same sex marriages.**'

So, our committee then got to work on the issue placed before us. Of course, in days to come, we will be considering other issues.

The history of the debate

This issue has come up before Assembly for a number of years.

The **2005 the Executive Commission** affirmed the following **Statement on Marriage**. '*Christian marriage is defined within the UPCSA as an ordained covenant that exists between one man and one woman under God for life and holds this definition to be consistent with the authoritative rule of Scripture as well as the tradition of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church*'.

And then Executive Commission gave the following instruction and exhortation:

*The Executive Commission **instructs** all marriage officers affiliated with the UPCSA to remain faithful to the church's definition of marriage, and to exercise pastoral compassion and sensitivity in their dealings with all who approach the church for assistance with marriage.*

*The Executive Commission **exhorts** all members of the church to uphold the sanctity of Christian marriage, and to acknowledge its role as the proper context for the expression of sexual intimacy between a man and a woman.*

This 'Statement on Marriage' and the instructions were confirmed by the **2006 General Assembly**.

At the Assembly in Eston, **2008**, the lengthy debate resulted in the majority view that '*homosexual practice was a sin*'.

More recently in **2016** a report was brought before the Assembly called **the Human Sexuality Report** by Robert Steiner. Assembly made the decision **not to receive the report**.

In **2021** a petition was brought before Assembly from the Egoli Presbytery, requesting that Ministers be allowed to bless same sex unions.

In **2022** the **Church in Society Committee** (CIS) who had been charged with dealing with that petition, sent out a questionnaire to the denomination to get a feel of the opinion across the whole denomination.

Fairly predictably, the results of the questionnaire showed that there was no consensus on this issue and that to give the green light to the petition **would cause great division in the denomination**, as it has done in other mainline denominations.

With those results in their possession, the CIS committee then decided to refer the matter at the 2023 Assembly to the Ethics Committee, presumably hoping we could resolve the issue.

The work of the Committee

The Ethics Committee was then furnished with

- i. the initial **petition from Egoli**
- ii. the results of the **denominational questionnaire**
- iii. the **Human Sexuality Report**.

The objective in making this previously unseen report available to the committee was so that we could understand the argument in support of the petition. This report gives a comprehensive and fairly clear argument for the acceptance and blessing of same sex unions. Our committee wanted to ensure that we all fully understood the arguments contained therein in the interest of hearing all views. We were mindful of the fact that we are all products of our culture and different theological strands and might come to the debate with a certain amount of bias or prejudice.

We then invited comments from the various members of the committee, and we were able to hear arguments from all sides.

Having given opportunity for discussion, we sent out a poll to the members to ascertain where everyone stood in light of the fact that they now had been exposed to fairly comprehensive arguments from all sides of the debate.

These were our findings from the committee members, who, we understand, were nominated as a fair **representation of the wider church**. We have a good representative country balance, a good gender balance and a good minister/elder/lay person balance on the committee.

Findings from the Poll

1. The first question asked was **"Has your position changed from what it was at the beginning of this exercise?"**

All 13 members indicated that their position had not changed since the beginning of this debate despite the circulation of clear arguments and various documents from all sides. So, in effect, that means everyone came with a presupposition or strong conviction that no amount of argument managed to change. We can therefore anticipate our denominational members to come to this debate for the foreseeable future with clear fixed convictions.

2. So too, the response to the second question **'Do you think that the issue of UPCSA blessing same sex marriages is a divisive issue?'** was that **all 13** agreed that the issue of blessing same sex marriages is divisive.

3. The question **'In view of the fact that same sex marriage is illegal in Zimbabwe and Zambia, do you think that a decision of our church blessing these in South Africa will put our brothers and sisters in a very difficult position?'** also elicited a similar overwhelming response with 12 members agreeing, with only one disagreeing. We note that this concern has been verbalised at various General Assemblies in the past.

4. To the question, **'Does the bible affirm the sanctity of Christian marriage only between a man and a woman?'**, the answer again was an overwhelming 'Yes' with 12 'for' and only one 'not sure'.

5. Question **'Do you think that the bible teaches that we should be accepting of any behaviour?'**

The committee was a **unanimous 13-0** on the question agreeing that the bible does not teach acceptance of all behaviour.

The understanding is that Jesus accepted everyone, whatever their background, but he always challenged folk to leave their old way of life, repent from sinful behaviour and embrace a transformed lifestyle.

6. Question. **'Do you think the church has been too critical in the past in dealing with this topic?'**

The answers here reflected a majority of **8-5** feeling the church had erred in being too critical in the past.

7. Question. **'Do you feel that the church should adopt a pastoral and gracious approach to those who are Gay, Lesbian, LGBTQ?'** Again, the response was **9-3** in favour of exhibiting a pastoral approach in line with Jesus' attitude of always showing compassion to everyone who came to him.

8. On the next question, **'Do you think that if the UPCSA allows blessings of same sex marriages that there could be a split in the church?'**, the group split into two clearly opposing camps at the ratio of **8-5** with the majority anticipating a possible split.

This was surprising in view of the fact that since we all agreed that we come to this debate with already fixed convictions/presuppositions and that the issue is divisive, and very difficult for our members from neighbouring countries, one would assume the danger of a split, something which we have witnessed in other denominations. But this was not the view of all members of the committee. It has been mentioned previously that acceptance of blessing of same sex unions could result in Presbyteries or Synods from Zimbabwe or Zambia seceding from the denomination. This is a risk we need to avoid at all costs.

9. Question. **'Do you think that the bible condemns the practice of homosexuality?'**

Now this question is decisive and determined everyone's answers from here on. Hereinafter, the team voted on an 8 – 5 split (or as a percentage 62% - 38%) voting as a block on the rest of the questions, obviously following their convictions. The majority answering 'Yes' and this **polarisation** remained consistent for the remainder of our questions.

This is obviously a fundamental question because it bears upon the fact how one interprets scripture. Despite all the members being made aware of the alternate interpretations forwarded for blessing same sex monogamous unions, the majority were unwilling to reinterpret what they understand as the clear position of scripture.

10. Question. **'Should openly gay people be accepted as members of the church?'**

On this question 5 said 'Yes' but the remaining 8 were not sure and remained undecided whether membership should be offered.

11. Question. **'Do you think a person in an openly gay relationship should be placed in public ministry positions?'**

Here, the same 5 said 'Yes' and 6 said 'No'. 2 were not sure.

So, now the majority swings from not being sure whether to accept a person as a member, to saying 'no' to them being placed in public ministry positions, with 2 still not sure.

12. Question. **'Should a person in an openly gay relationship be appointed in a leadership position in the church?'**

The answers here were more conclusive in that 8 (or 62%) said 'No' with 5 in favour. So, when we come to leadership positions, the majority is quite clear and would oppose putting these folk in leadership.

13. The final question - **'Would you vote in favour of the UPCSA blessing same sex marriages?'**

Here, folk answered in their established blocks – **8 to 5** against the motion.

So, based on the answers to the poll, if this issue was put to the vote, it would no doubt be lost at this time no matter what arguments are put forward, and the fallout from a split vote on the decision could damage the church. So, perhaps, wisdom would suggest that we should be very cautious about continuing to advocate for or make a decision on this issue for the time being.

Conclusion

It was anticipated from the outset that we would not get unanimity on this issue and our poll only confirms the divisions that still exist.

We respect everyone's opinions and accept that they are based on firm convictions which will not be altered anytime soon.

So, our recommendation would be rather than rehashing this at every Assembly, and causing frustration, hurt, and pain every time on both sides, that we agree to live with our differences and perhaps have a **moratorium** on this issue for three years.

As we stand, South Africans can legally get married under the Civil Unions Act of 2006, so there are no restrictions for them, and our Zimbabwean and Zambian members are not motivating for the law to be changed to allow same-sex marriages in their countries. The question is whether we bless these unions in our churches in South Africa and be seen by other believers to condone the practice. The great majority of our members from the various countries to our north would find this biblically unacceptable. This could result in the very real possibility of a split in the church.

Practical Way Forward

So, the suggested way forward is to welcome everyone into our churches, reminding ourselves that we are all broken people in need of forgiveness and healing. And we have to trust that the faithful preaching of the word of God, anointed by his Spirit, will bring the necessary transformation that God demands from all of us.

We would recommend that the church leadership would need to explain to those seeking blessing of same sex monogamous unions, that we, as a church, are not able to perform such ceremonies, because they do not fall within our understanding of a Christian marriage.

In addition, we would need to communicate with these folk, that while they are welcome to attend, their situation is such that to use them in any public ministry or leadership positions would cause others to stumble.

One might argue that that is hard for the individual or couple but unfortunately **that is the reality**, since the **witness** of our church and its' **unity** must always be our highest priority.

Closing comment

So, we as a denomination, have somehow to get the fine balance of loving and accepting all, of leading them to a relationship with Jesus, and encouraging them to live a life in line with clear biblical principles. Not an easy task, but we hope this document is helpful in trying to achieve those aims.

Acceptance of this report

Please note that this report comes with the acceptance of 11 of its' 13 members (which is an 85% concurrence). There is therefore a small minority who are not able to support the report and its proposals.

Proposals

1. Executive Commission receives the report.
2. Executive Commission makes the decision to have a 3-year moratorium on this issue.
3. Executive Commission again affirms the sanctity of Christian marriage only between a man and a woman and that any deviation from that would be a sin.
4. Executive Commission denies the petition requesting that UPCSAs Ministers be allowed to bless same sex unions.
5. Executive Commission urges all its' members to show great sensitivity and pastoral care to all those within the LGBTQ+ community.
6. Executive Commission urges all its churches to refrain from placing such folk in positions of public ministry or leadership.

Rev R.D.Spence
Convener
Ethics Committee

CHURCH IN SOCIETY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY (CIS) COMMITTEE TO THE 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

1. The CIS Committee started the term well, consisting of the following members: Rev Thembazana Ngalwana (Convener), Mr Oliver Muwowo, Rev Sam Kudakwashe Ruzivo, Rev Matshidiso Piroe, Rev Heidi Petersen, Ms Kelebogile Milanzi, Ms Anda Mtshutshwana, Rev Frikkie Botha, Ms Zintle Fili, Ms Belinda Crawford, Rev Robert Steiner, Mr Angus Howse, Mr Sakhele July, Rev Mzwamadoda Mfene (Eco-Justice Champion), Coordinators of Gender Desk and Coordinators of Youth Desk. Some members fell by the wayside. The Conveners of the Presbyteries' Church in Society Committees serve as corresponding members:
2. The work of the Committee is guided by the following terms of reference:
 - (i) To analyze the state of the nation and the Church in S.A., Zimbabwe, Zambia & the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and other topical issues globally, and present to the General Assembly and/or Executive Committee its views on these matters and especially on issues of justice in the Church and society.
 - (ii) To assist the UPCSAs with issues of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace, as they relate to Christian faith, living and church policies within and beyond the UPCSAs.
 - (iii) To prepare statements that will be circulated in and outside the UPCSAs by the office of the General Secretary after the endorsement thereof by the Assembly Business Committee.
 - (iv) To take part in broader debates and dialogues on social and economic justice issues with other denominations, in Councils of Churches that the UPCSAs is a member of, in the ecumenical bodies the UPCSAs is affiliated with, and interfaith dialogues/conversations.
 - (v) To oversee and facilitate the works of Gender Justice Desk, Youth Desk and Environmental/Ecological Justice Team.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY MATTERS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ZIMBABWE

3. The Presbytery of Zimbabwe's CIS Committee is active on matters of Church in Society. During the period under review, the Presbytery reported on the following matters:
 - 3.1 **Membership.** Church in Society committee is made up of the following members: Rev Ajapa, Rev Banda A, Mrs Chatikobo V, Ms Mhlanga, Mr Mudzingwa S, Mr Mapira T, Rev M Mutonganavo, Miss Ndawana M, Rev S Ruzivo (Convener), Miss Sibanda P, Mrs Yesaya S.
 - 3.2 **Lovemore Boys.** Lovemore Boys consists of:
 - 3.2.1 Nyasha Runodada Level 3:1 Radio and Television currently on Attachment with Econet.
 - 3.2.2 Brandon Chinyanga Level 4:2 Final Year in Development Studies.
 - 3.2.3 Wilderness Nyirenda Level 2:1 Logistics and Supply Chain Management Second Year
 - 3.2.4 Milan Tasunungurwa Level 1:2 Logistics and Supply Chain Management first year
 - 3.2.5 Brandon Muganhiri Level 1:2 HR First Year.
4. The year 2024 started on a very positive note and the boys continue to do well, by the grace of God. The School and Universities opened late due to cholera issues, but the boys have all been safe from the pandemic, thanks to God for that.

The Rev Garande and Trinity church helped the boys to settle down and provided some of the necessities to help them to be more comfortable, including the provision of WiFi. Beds were provided. All the districts are participating in the wellbeing of our boys. The City, through Western District, also donated another 2 single beds which made it easy to assist even a boy on attachment a descent bed. Mutare congregations, through the ministers of St Columbus and Sakubva, played a very important role in assisting one of the boys who was a victim of drug and substance abuse with counselling and even staying with him when the relatives had gone out of alternatives to help the boy. His condition was stabilised, and he is safely back in school. The Committee is still trying to connect the two boys with their relatives.

5. One of the boys is now on attachment, thanks to Econet wireless. He completed a training process at Econet and is now working as student on attachment up to the end of the year. He is now renting a room near Mrs Mark our treasurer and we are thankful that she is watching over him and has settled well. Lastly, thanks go to the stakeholders, ministers and congregations that have joined hands with the committee in seeing the work that was started by the church to completion.

6. **Sustainable Water.** The drilling and installation of a borehole for Robert Sinyoka Primary School was completed. The Zim Kids is now focusing on alleviating water crisis in the contexts of rural congregations and school children; for example Pre-school/ECD, Primary school and Secondary school and other projects that serves the vulnerable. For the year 2024, the Zim Kids shortlisted Mnondo Secondary school, Kubatana Congregation-Primary school and Mufakose Congregation- High school.

6.1 **Challenges**

The plan for repairing non-functioning boreholes is still work in progress. The Borehole pumps, solar panels and control boxes have been a target of the thieves recently and some boreholes have suffered of such. More congregations are facing water challenges due to failure delivery by their local municipalities.

6.2 **Way Forward**

Sustainable water program is planning to work on promoting aqua culture, flower and vegetable gardens for the congregations and schools as a way to raise funds for the maintenance of the boreholes.

Congregations and schools are encouraged to boost their security systems in safeguarding the boreholes.

The congregations that have applied for boreholes through CIS, kindly bear with the committee your turn will come.

6.3 **Plans**

Aqua Culture, Flower and Vegetable Gardening training workshops to congregations/ schools in need for borehole sustainable purposes.

7. **Gender Desk.** The Gender Desk is occupied with the following matters, among others:

7.1 **Marriage Act.** The new Marriage Act has brought a radical change to the marriage laws in Zimbabwe with the Marriage Act (Chapter 5:11) and Customary Marriages Act (Chapter 5:07) being repealed. The new Act introduces a civil partnership and a qualified civil marriage and recognizes an unregistered customary law union as a marriage. The Presbytery is engaging theologically on the document as to determine the position the Church may take in regards to this Marriage Act, as it affects the belief system in a number of ways.

7.2 **Matrimonial Cause Act.** This is an Act which has amended the law relating to marriage, judicial separation and nullity of marriages. Divorce is something that is also happening in the church and it is worthwhile to critically look into this for the

sake of learning, being equipped and be prepared on how best we can offer pastoral care to the persons who are facing such a dilemma.

- 7.3 **Domestic Violence Act.** The laws of Zimbabwe have not been silent in terms of all forms of Gender Based Violence, and they have a provision for the protection and relief of victims of domestic violence. This document is valuable to the Church because the Church is the voice of the voiceless hence it is called to protect the victims of domestic violence and in doing that it allows the victim to see the love of God.
- 7.4 **Ministry of Widows.** Widows are often neglected, discriminated, isolated; spiritually or socially or economically deprived in a number of ways. Paul in 1 Timothy 5:3-16 advocates for ministry of widows and on widow-care as one of the significant mandate to the church today especially to UPCSA in Zimbabwe. As a CIS we want to explore on the role of the church in taking care of its widows. This mandate is being derived from Paul who gives guidance on caring for genuine widows, instructs believers whose parents or grandparents are widows to care for them. The CIS plans to research more on the criteria for determining genuine widows to be cared for by the church spiritually in a holistic manner just like any other fellowship. Other churches like United Methodist Church are already having existing widow ministry in their congregations. We hope to explore into this ministry and bring a document in the next Presbytery meeting.

8. **Youth Desk.** The UPCSA's role in transforming the church is multifaceted, including encouraging active participation and faith formation among youth. The youth provide opportunities for service, leadership, and application of biblical teachings, fostering a strong foundation of faith in the community. The church emphasizes youth outreach and community involvement, fostering meaningful worship experiences that resonate with young people's hearts and minds. The church should foster mentoring relationships and positive role models for young believers, encourage intergenerational connections, and provide youth mission trips (exposure) and service opportunities to deepen their faith and understanding of the Gospel. The youth are not only the future of the church but also the present, valued for their gifts, wisdom, and experiences, as important members of Christ's body. Leaving the youth out the equation is hamartia, hinders development. We are "Stronger Together!" A proposal to this effect will follow.

9. **Humanitarian and Development**

- 9.1 **Budiriro and Kuwadzana Floods.** There was a sad incident that happened in Budiriro towards Christmas that many homes were flooded by water. In this incident one of our members was not spared. The committee tried to respond to this disaster, and we worked with the Budiriro Minister who was on the ground. One of the services was ministry of presence as the Minister managed to take a visit and offered psychosocial support. In this regard, Kuwadzana was also not spared by the floods and the Minister of Kuwadzana UPCSA also went to offer ministry of presence to the victims who were stationed in one of the evacuation centres at Kuwadzana Primary School where he met with the victims and offered psycho-social support.
- 9.1.1 **Challenges.** Challenges encountered in this work is that our Disaster Preparedness is so poor to the extent that the Church doesn't own up a 4*4 truck just to carry humanitarian work in responding to such kinds of disasters and do logistics. It took 2 days trying to reach out to church members in Budiriro 4. The office had some few resources to assist in this regard and it was impossible for the committee to reach out.
- 9.1.2 **Plans.** It is ideal for the Presbytery and the CIS to work in mobilizing resources for the 4*4 truck for Humanitarian Services and other CIS projects. The Committee is planning to work with Districts in equipping them for humanitarian services makes them ready to respond to disasters in their contexts.

9.2 **Gokwe Severe Hunger.** The Interim Moderator for Gokwe Congregation submitted a report to the Committee of Humanitarian crisis in Gokwe which has not spared the members of the church and other surrounding communities. Gokwe is currently facing a severe hunger crisis due to poor harvest that they have been experiencing in the previous years and has worsened due to the current drought. The situation is dire and intensely extreme as many people are now finding it hard to get something to eat.

9.2.1 **Challenge.** Intervention is scarce as for now.

9.2.2 **Plans.** The Committee is working on food mobilization from congregations. It also wants to introduce medium term plan, through engaging partners who can offer sustainable agriculture projects which gives good yield to such harsh weather conditions for the members.

10. **Peace, Social and Economic Justice.** The place of the Church in the context of politics, economics, social, technological and legislation is to promote the common good and preserve human dignity. The Church is fundamental in shaping the lives and intentions of individuals and extends to their social, political and economic intentions, having said this the CIS is targeting empowering congregations to be advocate and be agents of change in responding to issues in their contexts, especially in poverty alleviation and mitigation of vulnerability from different kinds of entanglement posed by the context.

10.1 **Plans.** Empowering congregations and communities with sustainable life skills.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY MATTERS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE UPCSА IN SOUTH AFRICA

11. The Committee scanned the environment in which the church exists and operates in the context of South Africa. The following ills and vices have been identified: Poverty, high unemployment rate, corruption, gender-based violence and femicide, substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), human trafficking, high rate of murder, high crime rate, loadshedding, and increasing tax rates. There is an increasing phenomenon regarding vandalization of and burglary in churches. There is also another habit of people, especially those running small businesses in the townships and rural areas, having to pay "protection fees" to the gangsters. The ecumenical movements need to be mobilised to address these challenges. Much as that is being done, the UPCSА congregations are encouraged to take steps towards moral regeneration and social upliftment. They should find ways of working with the police forums to bring stability and order in the communities. The churches should also work with the Department of Social Development to assist indigent families.

THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

12. At the time of writing this report, South Africa was busy preparing to hold national and provincial elections. The Committee got busy working with other structures, especially under the auspices of the South African Council of Churches to ensure free and fair elections. The Committee seconded Rev Patal\ki and Rev Morrison to represent the UPCSА in all the SACC interventions in that regard. The Committee encourages the UPCSА members to ensure that there is a safe space and environment for the elections to be conducted smoothly. The UPCSА and other denominations should be encouraged to pray for good governance after the elections.

INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS

13. Some parts of the world are embroiled in armed conflicts which senselessly cost lives and cause strife for the rest of creation. In this report, only three incidents will be cited.

13.1 **Russo-Ukrainian War.** The conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues unabatedly. It is sad to note that the world bodies are not finding an amicable solution to

the conflict. The whole world is adversely affected by the endless conflict, as it impacts on the global economy and international relations.

13.2 Israel/Palestinian Conflict. The UPCSА took a stance of approaching this matter from the point of view of justice. The UPCSА agreed to condemn any use of violence as a means of finding solution. Based on that, the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023 stand to be condemned. In the same breath, the inhumane decimation of the Gazans and the infringement of humanitarian aid, which border on genocide is strongly condemned. In this regard, the intervention of South Africa in the International Court of Justice is commended. The UPCSА should join all the voices that call for the respect and restoration of human dignity. Those countries who directly and indirectly sponsor the conflict should be condemned in the strongest terms possible.

13.3 DRC Conflict. Some of the people in the DRC have never seen peace and stability in that country. Hence, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) have become the order of life. The UPCSА operates directly in that space. It is important that the UPCSА engages with its members in that country to find out the ways it can offer help and solidarity. Again, the role of South Africa in working for peace and order is commendable. It is not the occupation of the Committee, in this report, to investigate the economic interests of South Africa in the DRC.

INTERVENTIONS TOWARDS A JUST AND PEACEFUL SOCIAL ORDER

14. The CIS Committee plans to engage in interventions to bring about a just and peaceful social order. The Committee observes with dismay the increase in the number of high-ranking politicians who are implicated in acts of crime and corruption. It should be noted that some of the politicians occupy church pews every Sunday. Hence, the Committee invited Rev Moss Ntlha, the General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA) to address a webinar on church, democracy, and elections on the 18th of March 2024. The Committee is planning to hold a post-election webinar which will be facilitated by Rev B Z Mkentane on 18 June 2024 at 18:00. The Committee intends to hold sessions for women, men, and ministers, as a way of contributing towards moral upliftment and encourage prophetic engagements. The first Women's Assembly for all women of the UPCSА is planned for the year ahead, and when all the planning is in place dates will be communicated to the whole denomination. The Conference is aimed at creating a safe space and equipping women for leadership positions in the church and our communities. CIS is planning to host the first Men's Assembly in pursuit of creating a safe space for men and to equip and develop men of the UPCSА. Early in the year 2025, the Committee is planning a "Reconnect" seminar for all the ministers of UPCSА in pursuit of the reconciliation follow-up. The UPCSА should encourage the development of the prophets who are going to give prophetic utterances from God in our times.

15. For the reasons of working towards a just and peaceful social order, the Committee, again brings to the attention of the Executive Commission the plan to address inequalities and inequities (injustices) in the UPCSА. The Committee observed that not much has been done to implement the provisions of this document. The observation and findings of the Committee, through the reports and interaction of presbyteries are presented below.

15.1 The UPCSА is slowly taking steps towards addressing the inequalities and injustices as affecting women, children, youth and persons living with disabilities.

15.2 The CIS has observed with great sadness the slow motion and the lip service that the Church (UPCSА) is paying towards transformation.

15.3 The UPCSА is not intentional about pronouncing on the issues of transformation of the UPCSА, such as racism and inequalities. Since 1999, there have been only 2 female moderators, no female general secretary and, recently, few female convenors of the General Assembly Committees.

- 15.4 There is no long-term goal for succession in the Central Office. There is no deliberate attempt to empower women. The few that are trying are, for some reasons, sabotaged. In the last General Assembly, there was an unfortunate proposal to waive the decision of finding the next female general secretary for our church, because there is no deliberate attempt to empower women to take the position.
- 15.5 The UPCSA is struggling to retain female ministers in the congregations. Most of them are in chaplaincy. One of the reasons is that there is no effective role of the pastor of pastorum to help them find stability in the congregations.
- 15.6 In some of the local churches, when there are session meetings or board of management, food is prepared by women only, whereas there are men who are chefs in their workplaces. Women are expected to go to the kitchen and miss all the deliberations and the proceedings of the session. They are sent to Presbyteries and General Assembly/Executive Commission as commissioners who cannot debate. Women must actively participate in the election of office bearers, Church Committees in order for them to be part of these important structures to avoid being perceived as people to prepare food, etc. In most cases, women underestimate their potential.
- 15.7 Sometimes we find old women who are not in a position to be capacitated in the type of leadership we are looking for such as computer literacy, such as the mere WhatsApp. There is an isiXhosa song that goes, "Abafazi phandle, amadoda endlini. Nditsho nangoku" (signifying that women must remain outside and leave men in the house)
- 15.8 The CIS laments the obstinacy of the factors that exacerbate the unfortunate situations of women, including patriarchy, negative masculinity, negative application of culture, negative social upbringing, and societal influences. Those manifest when women perform in the ministry.
- 15.9 The gender desk and youth desk are up and running with their programmes that are assisting the church in addressing these issues.
- 15.10 The UPCSA should be intentional in promoting cross-cultural ministry – interracially, internationally, and across ethnic divide.
- 15.11 The youth has demonstrated that our ministry is not on the same par with their evolving time, especially as it concerns freedom of expression.

16. The Executive Commission should instruct all the congregations, councils and fellowships of the UPCSA to internalise this document and put effort in ensuring its implementation, addressing those issues that are applicable immediately to their respective domains. The document is attached as an appendix to this report. The Committee will develop and share the mechanisms to implement and to monitor and evaluate the application of the document in the respective environments.

CONCLUSION

17. The Committee recognises that we have hit the half term mark and that not much has been achieved in relation to the terms of reference. The financial challenges are considered a significant contributing factor to the slowness in achievements. It is hoped that there will be better allocation in the budget of the next financial year. Then the Committee may achieve more. The Committee has experienced that remote/virtual means do not help much in meeting all the requirements. There should be at least one advance in person meeting to be able to focus on real challenges.

18. The Committee aspires to a situation where it can journey with the people as they go through various life-threatening situations.
We strive to walk in light and love.
We want to work for the common good.

We want to work with creativity, excellence, and integrity.

We need some practical steps or ways to show that we are deconstructing the walls of patriarchy and bringing back the dignity of the church and of human beings and the rest of creation.

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission commends the Presbytery of Zimbabwe for its diligence in matters of church and society.
3. The Executive Commission encourages the congregations to be active on church and society matters and report to the Presbytery CIS Committees.
4. The Executive Commission notes the involvement of the UPCSA through the CIS Committee in the activities leading to the successful holding of the national and provincial elections in South Africa.
5. The Executive Commission urges the congregations, councils and fellowship to internalise the plan to address the inequalities and iniquities (injustices).
6. The Executive Commission notes the following operational plan of the committee:
 - a. The first men's Assembly in 2024 will be held, dates and venue to be communicated in due time.
 - b. The first women's Assembly to be held later in 2024 dates, time and venue to be communicated when confirmations are done.
 - c. The reconnection seminar for ministers of the UPCSA in 2025.
7. The Executive Commission notes the theme for 2024: "You are God's masterpiece" and the bible studies that are planned for the rest of 2024.
8. The Executive Commission instructs the Manual Committee to insert the Gender Justice Policy in the Manual of Faith and Order.
9. The Executive Commission receives the Sexual Harassment Policy, sited as Appendix B to the report.
10. The Executive Commission a) adopts the policy b) sends the Sexual Harassment Policy to all Presbyteries for comment c) asks Priorities and Resources Committee to report on the responses in the 2025 General Assembly.



Appendix A

UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA PLAN TO ADDRESS INEQUALITIES AND INEQUITIES (INJUSTICES) IN THE UPCSA

1. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY MANDATE

The General Assembly that was held in East London within the bounds of Amathole Presbytery in 2016, inter alia, resolved as follows:

“In light of the recent racial incidents in the South African media and the current exclusions experienced by some ministers struggling to find placements in some of our congregations on the basis of the color of their skin, the General Assembly

- a) becomes deliberate in pronouncing its stance against racism both in the church and broader society; and
- b) instructs the Church in Society Committee to develop guidelines on how the UPCSA should deal with the issue of racism, determine the progress of transformation in the UPCSA, and to report back to the 2017 Executive Commission.”

“The General Assembly

- a. approves the UPCSA Strategic Plan for five years commencing in January 2017;
- b. urges all the structures of the church to implement and execute accordingly; and
- c. instructs all the members and the structures of the UPCSA to adhere to it.”

The Strategic Plan espouses the nine guidelines, which include the following:

1. The UPCSA will promote the equality of all its members and congregations
2. The UPCSA be welcoming to all, especially the youth
3. The UPCSA will reflect the demographics of its membership at all decision making levels and forums
4. The UPCSA will have cohesive, efficient and effective administration
5. The UPCSA will be financially sustainable
6. The UPCSA will be a reconciled Church

The attainment of the goals hinges on addressing inequalities, inequities and iniquities in the denomination.

The Church in Society Committee of the UPCSA General Assembly convened a consultation including the conveners of the other interested committees of the UPCSA to work a plan, as instructed by the General Assembly and as envisaged in the Strategic Plan. What follows is the outcome of a joint effort by the committees. It is presented to the UPCSA for attention and action.

2. **THE PLAN**

PREAMBLE TO ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES WITHIN THE UPCSА

A matter of fairness

The following constitutes an urgent and pressing call to the UPCSА for equity, an equity based upon the instruction and teaching of Holy Scripture. For example 2 Corinthians 8:13-14

“For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.”

At the meeting of the Church in Society Committee of the General Assembly held at the Emseni Centre, Benoni, Gauteng, South Africa on the 24th -26th January 2018, the issue of inequality within the UPCSА was considered.

We heard accounts - present, recent and historic - of ministers and their families suffering long term neglect, of some ministers dying without pension benefits and their widows (or widowers) and children suffering immediate eviction from the manse and permanent deprivation.

We heard that some Presbyteries are failing to adequately and timeously identify these situations and are not consistently addressing the concerns of the ministers and congregations.

Some congregations and ministers appear to get better care than others; there appears to be partiality (James 2:1). From time to time we are made aware of ministers and congregations suffering lack.

Consequences of these inequities

The consequences of these inequalities are varied and far reaching, and they include the following:

- Damage to the witness of the church, its ministers, their families, sessions and congregations.
- Neglected congregations continue under the burden of guilt and this may divide sessions.
- Bringing disrepute to the name of our Lord.
- Inter congregational disunity between the “haves” and “have nots”.
- Alienation of families and dependants of the ministers and congregants in dire need.
- Burnout of the minister and/or their spouse and family.
- Distraction from the work of ministry
- Relinquishing the call due to the need to adequately provide for the family

We recognise that most of the other denominations have already addressed these issues through the application of various forms of administrative justice.

We concluded that our allowing serious inequalities to continue is in itself an injustice (Titus 3:13-14) and an offence in God’s eyes: “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.” James 4:17

Our failure to act is not due to a lack of proposals; comprehensive plans and proposals have been presented to the General Assembly in the recent past yet, for whatever reason, these proposals were not adopted or implemented.

Whilst the equality issues remain unresolved, our intransigence is hypocritical; in this condition, how can we make pronouncements upon the injustices of society? (Matthew 7:3-5)

We recognised the truth that whilst we will propose legislation to address these injustices and whilst the legislation may mitigate the systemic injustices, the fundamental issue allowing these injustices to breed is a lack of Christian love.

We concluded that the first step in addressing our individual and corporate sin is repentance and then all the following recommendations can be considered with a humble and repentant attitude.

We therefore propose that we confess our failure to act as a sin.

We therefore call the General Assembly of 2018 to lead the UPCSА in owning up to the existing and past inequalities, declaring them plainly as an injustice and confessing our slowness to respond, our administrative incompetence and our feigned or real ignorance of these injustices as a sin that has brought the name of our Lord into disrepute (1 Peter 2:12).

We confess and repent of our sin:

- Of our failure to love, to share and to care for our neighbour.
- Of standing in open rebellion to the Word of God and the commands of our Lord (1 John 3:17, Matthew 3:8).
- Of hiding income.
- Of not communicating honestly or revealing our reasonable and pressing needs within our Presbyteries for fear of judgement, and/or shame.
- We have entered into the collusion of silence between the abuser and the abused.
- We have camouflaged our personal uncaring under the excuse of procedures and systemic failure.
- We have blamed the polity of our church or past racial injustices for our own hard-heartedness.

- We have shown partiality in our dealings with each other (James 2:1,9).
- We have deflected the proposals and recommendations presented at previous General Assemblies and Executive Commissions.
- For comfortably accommodating an incomplete act of grace (2 Corinthians 8:8).
- We have not fulfilled the royal law of love (James 2:8).

As a fruit of our repentance, we undertake to prayerfully consider the recommendations presented to us (and any other related proposals) to urgently address the issue of inequality in our denomination.

We ask our Lord for renewed hearts so that our remedial action will not be undertaken reluctantly or under compulsion (2 Corinthians 9:7)

IDENTIFIED PRIORITY AREAS OF CONCERN AND PROPOSED ACTION PLAN 2018

#	ITEM	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
1.	HEALING OF MEMORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the process of unity, reconciliation, healing and transformation to address the effects of and eliminate racism, tribalism and ethnicity that are prevalent in our church • Research / seek information on events that took place in our church • Training of CIS and UPCSA Committee members (inter-committee team) with the knowledge and skills for the healing of memories • Training of trainers for the whole church • Availability of funds for the healing of memories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church in Society • Doctrine Committee • Finance Committee • Ministry Committee 	April 2018 2018 General Assembly Ongoing
2.	TRANSFORMATION / RACISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to enhance dialogue and meaningful encounters • Engage in continuous dialogue to address issues of racism • Fanning of fires that promote racism in the context of new versus old PCSA/RPCSA Perception that all "White" ministers earn more than "Black" ministers. Black and white not to be the issue. Transformation should be. • Revitalising previously white congregations where membership has dwindled to reflect the changing demographics • White congregations to embrace and support work of church associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church in Society • Ministry Committee • Doctrine Committee • Worship Committee • Presbyteries 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Evaluation 		
3.	WELFARE OF MINISTERS AND CENTRALISATION OF STIPEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting plans in place to address inequalities Establishment of a task team to investigate and recommend how to address all forms of inequalities Centralisation of ministers' stipends as a possible major tool (The Presbyteries of Zimbabwe and Highveld are working on this project for their ministers at different scales and methods.) Ensure that ministers subscribe to the pension fund and register at SARS Identify training needs and link up with the listed committees Information collection tool in consultation with Presbyteries and Congregations on how ministers are paid (February Presbytery meetings) Develop a comprehensive model that instructs congregations to pay ministers' stipend Monitoring and evaluation tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Committee Ministry Committee Mission and Discipleship Presbyteries Congregations Ministers 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
4.	CATEGORISATION OF CONGREGATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address non-viability by twinning/merging close congregations Transparency and honesty regarding the finances of congregations Congregations to advise Presbytery of challenges experienced Congregations assessed according to their financial viability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry Committee Mission and Discipleship Doctrine Committee 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
5.	LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation and induction of newly elected elders about the structures of the church Training on roles and responsibilities Workshops on the Manual of Faith and Order Develop leadership programmes for all age groups with special emphasis on youth and women Capacity building on modern technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry Committee Doctrine Committee Mission and Discipleship Education and Training 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing

6.	SHARING OF ASSETS/RESOURCES; TRANSFER, PARTNERSHIP OF SKILLS AND INFORMATION SHARING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared ministry • Encourage partnerships (Congregation to Congregation; Presbytery to Presbytery) • Capacity building at congregational level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Committee • Priority and Resources • Ministry Committee • Doctrine Committee • Mission and Discipleship 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
7.	ETHOS/ LITURGY/WORSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liturgy to accommodate all languages • Encourage/Urge/Instruct structures/services to include youth at all levels • Ministers and Congregations to consider the youth in planning the style of worship services and those who participate in them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry Committee • Doctrine Committee • Mission and Discipleship • Congregations • Ministers 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
8.	INCLUSION OF CHAPTER ON CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS IN THE MANUAL OF FAITH AND ORDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual of faith and Order to govern the existence of church Associations • Guidelines on how Church Associations should operate • Monitoring and Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual Committee • Ministry Committee • Doctrine Committee • Church Associations Committee 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
9.	REPRESENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity in gender representation - equal balance of men and women in church structures/councils and as commissioners • Inclusion of youth as Commissioners to Presbytery and General Assembly councils • Representation of Church Associations in church councils • Nominations Committee to be sensitive of gender balance when setting up GA Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctrine Committee • Church Associations Committee • Nominations Committee • Ministry Committee • All the Councils • Nominations Committee 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
10.	CONFRONTATION/ RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous dialogue - create space for constant debates • Encourage participation to address flaws • Healing and Reconciliation sessions • Accountability - own up • Mediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry Committee • Church Association's Committee • Doctrine Committee • General Secretary • Church in Society 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
11.	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE BINDING NATURE OF THE DECISIONS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting by commissioners • Implementation of decisions by Presbyteries and congregations • Understanding of the binding nature of the decisions of the General Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Business Committee • All the Assembly Committees • Presbytery Structures • Congregations 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing

1 2.	ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GENDER AND YOUTH DESK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the General Assembly to approve the establishment of the Gender and Youth desks • Promote inclusivity and emphasise the radically inclusive nature of the Gospel • Every structure to include young people • Research on gender issues • Develop gender policy • Monitoring and Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities and Resources Committee to present to the General Assembly the need for the Gender and Youth desks • Mission & Discipleship • Education & Training • Doctrine Committee • Presbyteries • Congregations 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
1 3.	TRANSLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation kit to be prioritised • Develop a policy for the denomination that upholds the issues of transnationality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Business Committee • Assembly Committees 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
1 4.	INCLUSIVENESS IN DECISION MAKING/ CONSENSUS MODEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote maximum participation of all members by simplifying the decision making processes • User friendly decision making processes • Adequate orientation of commissioners on the decision making processes • Review the Consensus (Insaka) Model of decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Business Committee • Presbyteries • Church Associations • Congregations 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing
1 5.	PRESBYTERIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Presbyteries to exercise care and discipline of their ministers and congregations • Ability of Presbyteries to address stipend inequalities • Instruct Presbyteries to have information available on how Ministers are paid • Proper audit of congregations • Compliance by congregations regarding annual returns of minister's emoluments that provides information regarding life and work or assistance required depending on the state of the congregation • Submission by congregations to Presbyteries of Annual Financial Statements (AFS) and Minutes of Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) • Annual returns to the General Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presbytery Moderators , Clerks and Treasurers • Congregations 	2018 General Assembly Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Evaluation 		
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3. **CONCLUSION**

This plan serves as a guide to addressing issues of inequality, inequities, imbalances and injustices. The Presbyteries are encouraged to customize it to their own environments, so as to address the real issues on the ground. The General Assembly Committees should develop and execute their plans to support this plan. In our time, we should make a pledge to never tolerate injustices that are practised under our watch.

Appendix B Gender Desk Report

The Gender Desk underwent an adjustment phase in the year 2023, as the coordinators both took on new and more onerous responsibilities, but the committee remained strong and was still able to achieve the major awareness campaign of the 16 Days of Activism. The 16 Days of Activism kicked off on the 25th of November 2023, calling for individuals and congregations to join us in bringing awareness about the issues of Gender Based Violence, by either wearing black on Thursdays (#ThursdaysinBlack Campaign) or by wearing a white ribbon for the duration of the 16 days.

A webinar was held on the 30th of November 2023, where we offered a platform to listen to members of the UPCSA, their views and suggestions on how the gender desk can better do its work in the UPCSA and wider community. Then on the 8-9th of December 2023, we held our annual 24-hour prayer session, involving the Moderator of GA, presbyteries and fellowships and the youth desk. We are grateful to all who participated and gave of their time and prayers for this important event and issue. We have already begun planning this years program for the 16 Days of Activism.

The theme for 2024 is "You are God's masterpiece." Ephesians 2:10, building on the understanding that each individual is created in the image of God, and therefore valued as an integral member of creation. Firstly, accepting you are loved and valued, then helps us to see others in the same light.

We decided to have 4 bible studies expanding on this theme, and offering an opportunity for discussion, in order to better understand our roles and others. The first bible study was led by the Rev Jackie Barker, it was a great introduction and was well attended. The dates of the 3 other bible studies are 6th of May, 8th of June, 9th of August.

At the General Assembly of 2023, the policy for Gender Justice was adopted and was circulated to all Presbyteries for comment by the end of February 2024, no comments were received by the Clerk of Assembly or the Convener of CIS, so it is assumed that all are happy with the policy.

Alongside the development of the Gender Justice policy, work had already begun on a Sexual Harassment Policy for the UPCSA. Referring to both corporate and other denominations policies, we are presenting in the attached Appendix B, the Sexual Harassment Policy for adoption and circulation for comment from all Presbyteries.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY OF THE UPCSA

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The United Presbyterian Church in South Africa ("hereinafter referred to as the "UPCSA/ the Church") is committed to preventing sexual harassment and sexual misconduct but also addressing it when it occurs. Effective ministry in Christ requires that we maintain an environment in which all persons are respected, treated with dignity and are in a safe environment. The Church will respond to allegations of misconduct with justice and compassion.

It is then the UPCSAs policy that all its church members, officials, ministers, teachers, students, employees, and volunteers working in, with and for the Church, are to maintain the integrity of ministerial, employment, and professional relationships at all times. The UPCSA, prohibits sexual misconduct of any kind and will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy. This Policy is part of the UPCSAs commitment to a safe church environment for worship, fellowship and programs. This policy prohibits any form of abuse, exploitation or harassment.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

We believe and affirm every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). By recognizing that all human beings have sacred worth and are created in the image of God, we convey the good news of the gospel and provide an understanding of God. We further believe and affirm that sexual misconduct within the church is incompatible with biblical teachings and ethical standards. Even in the Bible these infamous sexual assault stories are recorded in the Bible with huge consequences on those who commit them. One of these Biblical stories with these bad consequences is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is evidently one of those where power is abused against those who are powerless and vulnerable (Genesis 18-19). Sexual misconduct is an abuse of power and authority. It alienates persons from the ministry of the church. It tarnishes the church's ministry and mission. Those guilty of sexual misconduct bring real harm to persons, congregations and the church as a whole, as is written in Genesis 34 in the story of rape of Isaac's granddaughter Dinah.

DEFINITION

Sexual Harassment is a form of sexual misconduct that is defined as, ***"any unwanted sexual comment, advance, or demand, either verbal or physical, that is perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender."***

To clarify further, it is an unwanted sexual or gender-directed behaviour that is so severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of employment, volunteer work, or unreasonably interferes with the complainant's performance or worship experience by creating a hostile environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit women, men, elders, children or youth.

Courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions between leadership, employees and members of the church, including men and women, that are appropriate in the congregation and acceptable to and welcomed by both parties are not considered to be harassment.

TYPES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. **A quid-pro-quo type of harassment** - where sexual favours are expected or requested from or offered in exchange for some benefit, or where discrimination or where

discipline or sanctions is imposed or threatened if requests for sexual favours are not met. This kind of conduct generally involves a person in a position of authority.

2. Maintaining, condoning, or contributing to an offensive work or worshipping environment which may include, but is not limited to, a variety of unwelcome behaviour (listed below) which may create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere.

Sexual harassment makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's participation in church-related activities, as well as situations which create an environment that is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient. Sexual misconduct involves the misuse of authority, power, or influence in a trust relationship to gain advantage over another in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner for any purpose, including for personal pleasure. Sexual misconduct takes advantage of the vulnerability of persons who lack power to act on behalf of their own welfare, including children.

- a) Unusual and overly friendly attention, including such things as gifts, frequent social telephone calls, letters, private visits, etc.
- b) Persistent shadowing or following, repeated or prolonged staring
- c) Sexual talk and innuendo, dirty jokes, and offensive gestures.
- d) Sexual or intrusive questions about individuals' personal life
- e) Use of familiarities or diminutive such as "honey", "baby", "dear", etc.
- f) Whistling, catcalls, leering.
- g) Unsolicited or unwelcome flirtations, romantic gestures, advances, propositions, manner of dress or display of body.
- h) Graphic, degrading, excessive or unwelcome comments about another individual's appearance, dress, or anatomy.
- i) Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
- j) Explicit descriptions of the employee or worshipper's own sexual experiences.
- k) Unnecessary, unwanted physical contact such as touching, hugging, pinching, patting, kissing.
- l) Verbal and emotional manipulation and control.
- m) Exposing genitalia.
- n) Physical or sexual assault
- o) Sexual intercourse or rape

Note:

Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment or misconduct, regardless of his or her sex or the sex of the offender. UPCS Church recognises that sexual harassment may also occur between people of the same sex. The primary factor is that the sexual conduct is unwanted and unwelcome by the person against whom the conduct is directed.

UPCS Church recognises that sexual harassment and misconduct often, but not always, results as a result of an imbalance of power within unequal relationships in the church hierarchy. Anyone, including leadership, administrators, employees, members of the church who sexually harasses another or commits sexual misconduct will be reprimanded in accordance with this internal policy.

All sexual harassment or misconduct is prohibited whether it takes place on the premises of UPCS Church or away from the church, including, for example, during social events, community events, trips, worship services away from the church premises, training sessions or conferences. Calls, texts, emails, and social media usage can constitute unlawful harassment, even if they occur away from the UPCS premises, on personal devices or during non-work hours.

Nothing in this Policy should be read to prohibit an individual who is not the alleged offender or victim from reporting sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, verbal, or physical abuse if such violations are observed or made known to that individual.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the following persons in the church working environment and anywhere else as a result of church employment responsibilities or church relationships:

- Paid church employees at all levels
- Church Members
- Volunteers and or lay leaders elected or appointed to the UPCSA
- Clients, suppliers, and contractors who are sourced for specific tasks or services by the UPCSA
- Visitors to the Church
- All Ministers, Probationers, Elders, Lay Preachers, Deacons, Managers, Children Ministry, Women Ministry, Men Ministry, Teachers, Members in elected and appointed positions, students, or any other person employed or covenanted and representing the UPCSA in any way
- Any other person/s who have dealings with the UPCSA

STRUCTURE

The General Assembly shall authorize and appoint a **Safe Church Compliance Team** (hereinafter referred to as SCCT) that will be vested with authority to receive, investigate, make findings and report on complaints arising under this Policy. The SCCT of General Assembly will consist of 7 members – 4 females (2 ministers and 2 elders) and 3 males (2 ministers and 1 elder) and 3 alternates (2 young people (females) and young person (Male)).The General Assembly shall authorize funds to educate and train the SCCT members to fulfil their function.

The General Assembly will review the composition of the Compliance Committee at least bi-annually to ensure competence and effectiveness. These members shall not be appointed by the Nominations Committee of the General Assembly but shall be identified by the Moderator of the General Assembly the Clerk of Assembly the General Secretary Convener of CIS, and both Co-ordinators of the Gender Desk

The members of this team shall all be screened according to the Child Protection Register, as per the Regulation 44, Section 126 of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 in South Africa. This is done through the local police station. The UPCSA (Zimbabwe, Zambia and DRC Congo) are to check their local protocols and legislation in this regard and advise the Gender Desk so that it be inserted in the policy.

The team shall be appointed bi-annually and may be re-appointed for another term.

The SCCT members shall therefore sign a Confidentiality declaration (Attached herein as an annexure).

The Presbytery shall establish SCCT teams at their levels comprising of 3 women (1 minister and 2 elders) and 2 men (1 minister 1 elder) and 2 alternates (I female youth and I male youth), who must also be screened accordingly. These may report directly to that Assembly SCCT through the Presbytery Clerk/Moderator. Presbyteries shall inform all their members of the availability of the Presbytery SCCT.

The Presbytery SCCT will be responsible in dealing with any sexual harassment cases within the Presbytery and congregations in that Presbytery.

All complaints against ministers will be reported directly to the Assembly SCCT who in turn will alert the Moderator of General Assembly of the said allegations, and the Moderator shall prioritise those cases and constantly report the progress made to the SCCT.

Each case shall be reported to the (structure of Assembly acting between Assemblies and to Moderator of General Assembly’s) and an annual report shall be submitted to the General Assembly or Executive Commission. The Clerk of Assembly shall retain a copy of the Confidentiality declaration signed by members of the Team both at Assembly and presbytery levels. The work of the team shall be confidential, and they shall not be required to report to Presbyteries other than that they are available at all times to assist in cases of harassment or abuse. In the cases where there are allegations of rape and other brutal abuse, that need referrals or involvement from law enforcement, the Moderator of the General Assembly should be advised by the General Assembly SCCT solely for information purposes.

All complaints shall be treated with respect and in confidence. No complainant will be victimized or face retaliation for reporting any potential violations of this policy in good

faith. UPCSAs Members are all encouraged to be truthful at all times when reporting sexual abuse cases.

The General Assembly shall authorize funds to educate and train the SCCT members to fulfil their function.

RETALIATION

Unlawful retaliation can be any action that could discourage someone from coming forward to make or support a sexual harassment claim. Adverse action need not be job-related or occur in the church to constitute unlawful retaliation (e.g., threats of physical violence outside of church or work hours).

Such retaliation is unlawful and will discourage members who:

- made a complaint of sexual harassment, either internally or with any anti-discrimination agency.
- testified or assisted in a proceeding involving sexual harassment.
- opposed sexual harassment by making a verbal or informal complaint, or by simply informing a supervisor, manager or church leader of harassment.
- reported that another employee or volunteer has been sexually harassed; or
- encouraged a fellow employee, church member or volunteer to report harassment.

Even if the alleged harassment does not turn out to rise to the level of a violation of law, the individual is protected from retaliation if the person had a good faith belief that the practices were unlawful.

However, this retaliation provision is not intended to protect persons making intentionally false charges of harassment.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

All church leaders, office bearers of the church at all levels including fellowships who receive a complaint or information about suspected sexual harassment or observe what may be sexually harassing behaviour or for any reason suspect that sexual harassment is occurring, are mandated to report such suspected sexual harassment to the SCCT, as outlined below. In addition to being subject to discipline, if they engaged in sexually harassing conduct themselves, supervisors and church leaders will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing sexual harassment to continue. Supervisors and church leaders shall also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES AND INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITY

Reports of allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded. Preventing sexual harassment is everyone's responsibility. UPCSAs cannot prevent or remedy sexual harassment unless it has knowledge of such improper actions. Reports of allegations shall be handled confidentially, both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate person(s), as outlined below.

Anyone who is subject to sexual harassment or misconduct, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse should, if possible, inform the alleged offender that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. The UPCSAs recognises that sexual harassment or misconduct, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse may occur in the context of an imbalance of power as a result of a superior and a subordinate relationship, and that it may not be possible for the victim to inform the alleged offender.

If a victim cannot directly approach an alleged offender, he or she may approach any member of the SCCT to register a complaint. In the alternative a victim may also approach any member within the church leadership, who will then promptly relay the complaint to the SCCT.

When the SCCT receives a complaint under this Policy, whether one of sexual harassment or misconduct, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse, the SCCT will:

- immediately disclose any conflict of interest presented by the particular matter to the SCCT, who will then inform the General Assembly Moderator and Clerk of Assembly who

will promptly replace the conflicted member(s) in the particular inquiry from the alternates. The conflicted members shall remain on the SCCT for all other matters)

- As promptly as possible, but in no more than 7 working days of receiving the complaint, the SCCT shall initiate an investigation to determine whether there is a reasonable basis for believing that the alleged violation of this policy occurred.

- immediately record the date(s), time(s) and facts of the incident(s)
- ascertain the views of the complainant as to what outcome he/she wants
- ensure that the complainant understands UPCSA procedures for dealing with the complaint (especially chapter 18 MOFAO when necessary)
- discuss and agree on the next steps: either informal or formal complaint, on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the complainant from pursuing a formal complaint if he/she is not satisfied with the outcome.
- keep a confidential record of all discussions (consent to be sought from the client first)
- respect the choice of the complainant
- bear in mind that the accused is entitled to due process

The SCCT, in its discretion, may seek legal counsel whenever such is deemed prudent to fulfil its duties.

Throughout the complaint procedure, a victim/survivor is entitled to assistance from a counsellor within the UPCSA community. The SCCT, as part of its duties, will identify and engage a sufficient number of counsellors with special training to enable them to assist victims/survivors of sexual harassment or misconduct, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse. UPCSA recognizes that because sexual harassment or misconduct, exploitation, physical and verbal abuse often occurs in unequal relationships, victims often feel that they cannot come forward. UPCSA must understand the need to support victims in making complaints.

INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

If the complainant chooses to address the matter informally, the SCCT shall:

- give an opportunity to the alleged offender to respond to the complaint
- ensure that the alleged offender understands the complaint process
- facilitate discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution which is acceptable to the complainant, unless the supervisory relationship or severity of the allegations indicate that this would be unsafe or unreasonable.
- ensure that a confidential record is kept of what happens
- remind all parties that retaliation is prohibited
- follow up after the outcome of the complaint process to ensure that the behaviour has stopped
- ensure that the above is done speedily once the complaint is made
- bear in mind that the accused is entitled to due process

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

If the complainant wants to make a formal complaint or if the informal complaint process has not led to a satisfactory outcome for the complainant, the formal complaint process should be utilized to resolve the matter.

When a formal complaint is made, the SCCT shall institute a formal investigation. The SCCT, in its discretion, may deal with the matter internally, or refer the matter to an internal or external investigator.

In carrying out the investigation, the SCCT or the investigator at its direction shall:

- interview the complainant and the alleged offender separately
- interview other relevant third parties separately
- decide whether the complaint is credible and the reasons if they feel it is not credible
- produce a report detailing the steps in the investigation, findings, and any recommendations
- obtain and preserve any tangible evidence bearing on the investigation, such as emails, text messages, voicemail messages, photos, etc.

- if the complaint is found to be credible and that the harassment, misconduct, exploitation, or physical/verbal abuse took place, decide what the appropriate remedy for the complainant is, in the particular circumstance, in consultation with the complainant (e.g. - an apology, a change to working arrangements, training for the offender, discipline, suspension, dismissal, etc.)
- follow up to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, that the behaviour has stopped, and that the victim is satisfied with the outcome
- if it cannot determine that the harassment, misconduct, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse took place, he/she may still make recommendations to ensure proper operations of the church
- keep a record of all actions taken
- ensure that all records concerning the matter are kept confidential
- ensure that the process is pursued thoroughly, but as quickly as possible
- remind all parties that retaliation is prohibited
- report violations of this Policy to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, where warranted
- bear in mind that the accused is entitled to due process

The SCCT should establish a register of offenders which should be kept by the Clerk of Assembly for future reference.

LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND EXTERNAL REMEDIES

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the UPCSА, but it is also prohibited by the law. Aside from the internal process at UPCSА, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the appropriate governmental entities after all the internal processes have been exhausted.

CHILD ABUSE

In any instance where the SCCT has reasonable cause to believe that a minor is being subjected to abuse, neglect or exploitation, either within the scope of UPCSА operations or otherwise, the SCCT shall immediately contact the appropriate child welfare authorities, state or local agencies, and refer the matter for their investigation, in addition to taking necessary steps to secure the safety and well-being of the minor(s) in question.

SANCTIONS AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Anyone who has been found to have violated this Policy is subject to any of the following sanctions:

- verbal or written warning
- adverse performance evaluation (if a church employee)
- reduction in wages (if a church employee)
- removal from current position or re-assignment
- demotion from current position
- suspension from position
- suspension from affiliation with UPCSА
- dismissal from affiliation with UPCSА
- personal civil liability
- criminal culpability

The nature of the sanctions will depend on the gravity and extent of the violation(s). Suitable deterrent sanctions will be applied to ensure that incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse are not treated as trivial. Certain serious cases, including physical violence, will result in the immediate dismissal of the offender.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

The UPCSА will ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons. It will be included in the church policies and procedures. All church leadership, church members, administrators, and staff must be trained on the content of this Policy as part of their induction or continued affiliation with UPCSА and must undergo refresher training

at least yearly. All church members and volunteers must be made aware of this policy at regular intervals but at least yearly.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIPS COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY CHURCH FELLOWSHIPS COMMITTEE REPORT 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Moderator and the members of the Executive Commission it is a great pleasure to present the progress report of the UPCSA Fellowships. Fellowships are regulated and governed by the constitution approved by the 2019 executive commission in Gqeberha. The constitution gives all five fellowships the same Aims and Objectives. As a committee, we believe there is great wisdom in that position because we interpret this as a call to the fellowships to work closely together. There is no point in working in silos yet they are expected to deliver the same outcomes. This is the task that the committee is working on and is bringing some proposals to this executive commission. We are pleased to report that fellowships are continuing to make positive progress. We wish to commend the cooperation we are receiving from the fellowships' leadership. More emphasis has been made on the leadership to make sure that fellowships are revived and vibrant in the local church. This is because it has been noticed that more focus is on the denominational level and less or sometimes no effort is given in the local church.

2. LIFE AND WORK OF THE FELLOWSHIPS

2.1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. The Fellowship of Women seems to be on track in terms of the way forward. They have developed their strategic plan which has made good attempts in aligning with the vision and mission of the denomination. The following are the fellowship strategic goals; a) organisational effectiveness b) spiritual and numerical growth c) financial sustainability d) social imperatives e) strategic partnerships. The Fellowship of Women is slowly but surely becoming an oiled machine. There has been decline in membership. From just over 14 000 members to just over 13 000 affiliated members. The fellowship has produced version three of their bi laws and is currently finalising for it to be submitted for ratification. The fellowship is not yet registered as NPO/PBO.

2. Fellowship of Young Women: It is sad to report that things are not shaping up in this fellowship. The executive is struggling to meet. There have been resignations. They had to postpone the first council meeting due to lack of proper preparation. The conference nearly collapsed due to the issue of conference representation. There is no proper plan of action let alone strategy. The CFC has identified this error and means are done to work closer with the executive in an attempt to remedy the situation. The fellowship is not yet registered as a NPO/PBO.

3. Fellowship of Youth: This is a very vibrant fellowship. The current leadership is focused however they lack long term planning. Intervention has been made through the fellowships consultation that met in January.

4. Fellowship of Men: Fellowship of Men started very well as they developed their strategy for the next 5 years. They have 6 strategic goals namely; a) evangelism b) building leadership capacity on men and health and wellness c) building a sound financial sustainability d) promote equality ,unity , and justice for all e) attract younger generation to the fellowship f) provide effective administration at all levels. The challenge at the moment is that the fellowship seems to have difficulty in implementing what they have planned. The fellowship is aware of the 9 strategic goals of the denomination, and it believed that their strategy took cognisance of the denominational strategy. Membership of this fellowship has increased by at least 10%, from just over 1400 to over 1500. Denominational conference representation remains a thorny issue in this fellowship besides that the fellowship is alive. This fellowship is not yet registered as NPO/PBO.

5. Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians: The FCCM by its establishment differs from other fellowships. This fellowship is in the music business, and it looks like the leadership is on top of its game. The fellowship only has a draft strategy that is going to be adopted in the next conference. The bi-laws are at the final stage and they will be ready for submission for ratification. This fellowship is struggling to get membership in the majority of our presbyteries. That is the reason why it took a deliberate decision to rotate its conferences to all presbyteries irrespective of having members or not. The committee urges presbyteries to welcome this move and support the work of the FCCM. This fellowship is the only fellowship that is registered as a PBO. They are now working on NPO registration.

2.2. MEETINGS

1. **Fellowship of Women** had four executive meetings and three Central Council meetings.
2. **Fellowship of Young Women** had two executive meetings and failed to meet on their first council. They still hope to meet before the end of April.
3. **Fellowship of Youth** had 2 executive meeting and two council/senate meetings.
4. **Fellowship of Men** had planned twelve executive meetings and four council meeting. So far only one successful council met and the other one was not a success.
5. **Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians** had two executive meetings and the council will be in August.

2.3. CONFERENCES

1. Fellowship of Women held their 2023 conference within the bounds of the Presbytery of eThekweni from the 3rd to the 6th August 2023 and their next conference will be held within the bounds of Amathole Presbytery from the 8th to the 12th August 2024.

2. Fellowship of Young Women held their 2023 conference within the bounds of Central Cape Presbytery and their 2024 conference will be held within the bounds of East Griqualand from the 3rd to the 6th of October 2024.

3. Fellowship of Youth had a successful conference within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery and their 2024 conference/convocation will be held within the bounds of Tshwane Presbytery from the 4th to the 7th July 2024.

4. Fellowship of Men held their colourful conference within the bounds of Trans Xhariep Presbytery and the 2024 conference will be hosted by the presbytery of Drakensburg from the 5th to the 8th September 2024.

5. Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians 2023 conference was hosted by Amathole Presbytery and the 2024 conference will be hosted by the Presbytery of Limpopo from the 19th to the 21st April 2024.

2.4. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Fellowship of Women: There is great commitment from this fellowship to focus more on spiritual development of its members. This is going to be achieved through encouraging and monitoring of prayer days at the congregational levels. It is also deliberate on their strategic plan that conferences from now on will allocate more time on spirituality than on administration. Some of the actions taken to improve this aspect involve the building of a strong team of prayer coordinators both at presbytery and congregational levels, weekly online prayers, organising retreats at denominational and presbytery levels, encouraging pastoral visits to the elderly, the sick and the bereaved at congregational level.

2. Fellowship of Young Women: The fellowship has a department that focuses on the spiritual development of its members. However, the report shows that there is still work to be done in assisting those responsible in all levels to understand the actual requirement

of the office. This is an error that has been identified by the CFC and capacity will be given to the relevant individuals.

3. Fellowship of Youth: This is a very vibrant fellowship when it comes to the issues of spirituality. The challenge is that their vibrancy is more visible at the denominational level.

4. Fellowship of Men: The fellowship is managing this aspect through the evangelical department which is responsible for the revival services both in house and outside the fellowship. Weekly prayers are encouraged at the congregational level. This department conducts what is called faith clinics.

5. Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians: There is no deliberate program that addresses this aspect on this fellowship. It is understood that music plays its part in spiritual development of an individual. The focus of this fellowship is to do their best in producing quality and spirit filled music which touches the souls of those who listen to it.

2.5. OUTREACH/SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. Fellowship of Women: The fellowship continues to reach out to the community through various interventions that are done at various levels of the fellowship. At the 2023 conference, the fellowship made a donation to the local NGO. Hospital and centre visits are done by a number of congregations. In these visits they bring gifts of various kinds. There is a growing number of fellowships at the congregational level who are taking care of the less fortunate and the elderly within their congregations. Contributions are freely made by the fellowship towards the appreciation services of ministers and Christmas gifts of spouses.

2. Fellowship of Young Women: This fellowship managed to donate sanitary towels to the community during their conference in the Central Cape. It remains a challenge that such projects are only done at the denominational level. There are no reports of local churches being involved in community work. The CFC is addressing the matter with this fellowship and also with other fellowships.

3. Fellowship of Youth: Not much has been done on this area. However, it will be catered for in the strategic plan that this fellowship is planning to produce.

4. Fellowship of Men: The fellowship has not planned any social response in the period under review. However, it is in the plan for the future.

5. Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians: This fellowship is passionate on giving to the community such that on every conference they collect something to be donated to a local NGO. The only challenge is that this is done on the denominational level only.

2.6. MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1. Fellowship of Women: The fellowship of women is allocating an hour for membership development in all their council meetings. Two leadership workshops have been conducted in the period under review. The current focus is on equipping presbytery executives with necessary skills. Another strategy session is scheduled for June 2024.

2. Fellowship of Young Women: Nothing has been done nor is planned yet.

3. Fellowship of Youth: No report on this area

4. Fellowship of Men : This fellowship has not coordinated any membership development at the denominational level however it is believed that some kind of development is taking place at presbytery levels.

5. Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians: Music workshops are conducted every time there is a council meeting and the music co-ordinator is always available for

presbyteries that requires his services. Leadership workshops are conducted at the presbytery levels.

2.7. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE CHURCH FUNDS/ PROJECTS

1. Fellowship of Women: This fellowship gave a sum of R25 000 towards the training of ministers and a sum of R40 000 towards PEF. This show great increase on figures if it is compared with the donations made in the last report. The fellowship reported that local fellowships are making various contributions towards their stewardship/deacons board.

2. Fellowship of Young Women: no contribution so far

3. Fellowship of Youth: This fellowship is pioneering the PEF contributions from their local structures since PEF Sunday is during the month of June.

4. Fellowship of Men: Currently there is no contribution towards the church's fund or project. Also nothing is planned in the near future.

5. Fellowship of Church choirs and Musicians: No contribution so far

2.8. STATE OF FINANCES FOR THE FELLOWSHIPS

1. Fellowship of Women: In the past year, the fellowship recorded the deficit however their financial situation is manageable. As part of their strategy they are developing a new ways of fundraising.

2. Fellowship Young Women: The state of finance for this fellowship is not looking good at all. They have only one source of income which is affiliation which comes once a year.

3. Fellowship of Youth: The state of finances of this fellowship is not good but enough to keep them going for now.

4. Fellowship of Men: The fellowship believes that it is in an acceptable state of finance.

5. Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians: The financial situation of the fellowship is not looking good.

3. CONSULTATION OF DENOMINATIONAL EXECUTIVES AND CFC

On The 19th and 20th January 2024 the committee conducted Fellowships denominational executives Consultation at Mseni within the bounds of Highveld presbytery. The committee wish to thank the support given by the clerk of Assembly who was so resourceful in the meeting.

The main purpose for this consultation was:

1. Review the work done since establishment of new committees
2. To align the work of the fellowships within its structures.
3. To align work of the fellowships with the strategy of the denomination

The committee wishes to report on the issues that were discussed and the direction the fellowships intend taking going forward.

3.1. THE FELLOWSHIPS CONSTITUTION AND THE BI-LAWS

The committee is happy to report that there is now clear understanding of the relationship of these two legal documents. As a result, we are seeing a delay in the submission of the bi-laws for ratification because fellowships are busy trying align their bi-laws with the constitution. Most of the bi-laws are at the final stages and soon will be ready for submission.

3.2. **Electoral procedure for fellowships**

The consultation reaffirmed its position on having the same electoral procedure for all fellowships and went further to suggest the same term of office for all fellowships starting and ending at the same time. It was agreed that 2025 will be the year of elections for all fellowships. A request is made to the fellowships that are due for election in 2024 to delay elections until 2025 or if the situation demands agree that those who will be elected in 2024 will have a longer term of office. The same request is made to those fellowships who are due for elections in 2026 to agree to shorten the term for the current office.

3.3. **Standing orders for the conferences**

The consultation agreed that there is a need to create same standing orders for all fellowships. This will assist mainly those members with dual membership not to confuse standing orders when they attend different conferences but also make it possible for those who come as fraternal delegates from other fellowships to be able to participate freely in the proceedings of that particular meeting.

3.4. **Compliance**

1. The consultation agreed that NPO/PBO registration must be finalised by end of November 2024. However a request was made to ask the General Treasurer to a meeting with the executives for further clarity so that a decision can be taken whether fellowships register as individual fellowship or register as a group of fellowships.

2. All fellowships are going to align their financial year end with that of the denomination which is June month. The consultation believe that this will be possible to start in 2026.

3. The submission of audited financial statement to the GA finance committee is going to take place starting from November 2024.

4. All fellowships will have to have a strategic document as a guiding document for their work. The strategy must be in line with that of the denomination. Fellowships should be able to identify goals that they want to work on out of the nine strategic goals of the denomination.

3.5. **The role of ministers and their spouses**

The committee regret to report that it has not been able to call a consultation for ministers and spouses who have interest in the fellowships. This is still the desire of the committee. However, for the female spouses there is a retreat planned by the Fellowship of Women which is going to take place at Mseni in May 2024.

3.6. **The uniform**

The committee is happy to report that the committee on uniform has been established. It consists of 3 members of the CFC and two members from each fellowship. It was agreed that the first meeting will be held not later than July 2024. The committee wishes to report that the delay was caused by the fact that the committee listened and observed the reaction of people on the announcement of the General Assembly decision to take the discussion on uniform out of the agenda of the conferences, the committee felt it was necessary to allow people to digest the decision and act when more people understand the direction that is being taken.

3.7. **Representation at the denominational conferences**

As it was reported above, two conferences nearly collapsed when members were arguing the issue of representation at the denominational conferences. The committee is of the view that if this matter is not managed properly, it has a potential to take us back. It will be a fair conclusion of the committee to say

the question of "**US and THEM**" has not completely moved from the minds of some if not most members of fellowships. This is one of the causes that make the committee to struggle to make members understand that fellowships are complete new entities in the UPCSAs.

The issue here is that representation is equal number per presbytery and there are those who are happy with that. The other view argues that representation at this level should be per congregation. Those who argue for this view say that allows maximum participation of membership. On the other hand there is the feeling of being outvoted should a need to vote arises. We do not want to enter into the debate of who will outvote who but the truth of the matter is that the debate becomes hot on this matter. Another problem in the system is that equal number of delegates constitute the council. Council deliberate on the matters and bring them to the conference. In the conference members of the council become official delegates of the conference. In a FOYW conference which is attended by 300 members only 32 or so are official delegates and they are the only ones with powers to vote. As committee we do not want to suggest that Executive Commission decide on which one of the two system of representation is right. Rather, we wish to request the executive commission to remove this item in the agenda of conferences by issuing a moratorium which prohibits conference to take decisions at least for the next five years. Decisions must be taken at the council level where there is equal representation per presbytery and there is no disagreement on representation. Councils only bring a report to the conference which is attended by all members who wish to attend. If there is an issue that a conference feels very strong against, the matter be referred back to the council to rework it and there is no vote taken at conference. This will also assist in shaping the agenda of the conference where the agenda will have minimum administration and be more on spiritual and developmental issues. The committee wishes to report that this is the view that the consultation of the executives endorsed as a solution going forward.

3.8. A Quest for a revival

On the 23rd of March 2024 the convenor together with the representatives of all the fellowships attended a meeting called by the sitting Moderator where serious discussion took place under the above subject. At the end of that meeting, all of us came out convinced that there is a need for revival in our denomination. Fellowships have a big role to play in making sure that the fire of revival is burning in each and every corner of our denomination. We believe that the executive commission by implementing the request on 3.7 above, the executive commission will be making it possible for the fellowships to have more time to focus on the revival matters than on administration. Conference will be the platform to equip individual members on how to light the fire in their streets, village and branches before they come to congregations and presbyteries. The language of fellowships will be revival all the time and if that succeed it will mean going for growth will also succeed.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the committee wishes to thank the current leadership of the fellowships for their dedication and commitment to creating something new. The committee also wishes to urge Presbytery CFC to work closely with the fellowship structures at that level. The committee also wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Commission to the fact that the consultation of fellowship executives has no legal status, yet it has proved to be an effective structure that has a helicopter view of all fellowships and it can suggest a way forward in all situations. It was the agreement of the last consultation that the committee requested the Executive Commission to approve the establishment of the structure and name it Church Fellowships Central Committee with the following terms of reference:

5. Proposals

1. That the Executive Commission receives the report
2. That the Executive Commission notes with appreciation the work done by the fellowships
3. That the Executive Commission thanks the Fellowship of Women and the Fellowship of Youth for the donations they have made towards the programs of the denomination.
4. That the Executive Commission notes with appreciation the commitment of the fellowships to adhere to all the compliance requirements.
5. That the Executive Commission agrees to approve the consultation of fellowships executives together with the CFC and the structure shall be called Church Fellowships Central Committee.
6. That the Executive Commission agrees to pass a five-year moratorium on all fellowships conferences as decision-making structure and confer all decision-making powers to the council of each fellowship.
7. The Executive Commission supports the commitment made by the fellowships to promote revival in the denomination.
8. The Executive Commission encourages fellowships to prioritise revival/spiritual growth in their conferences.

Rev. Thabani Masikane (Convenor)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITY COMMITTEE

Report to Executive Commission 2024

The PWD Committee met frequently throughout the past year. Addressing the various challenges that we faced as a fledgling committee. There were some hurdles, for instance, the survey was distributed to the congregations. However, the channels of communication were hampered by the email address not being communicated. The Terms of Reference, assisted in laying out the cornerstone of the committee for the foundation to be laid. Included in the report is the work that is accomplishing the inclusivity of People with Disabilities on a practical, ground-level case study within the bounds of Zimbabwe.

1. PREAMBLE

People with Disabilities Committee's Terms of Reference, as laid out in the following points, are provided by the committee to guide the future of the ministry with the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ and the members who serve on the committee. To those who have been denied the opportunity to be included in their local church, thereby adapting the changes for the betterment of People with Disabilities in our denomination of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (UPCSA).

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) Transforming all churches to be disability inclusive.
- b) To provide support in attaining complete disability inclusivity.
- c) To guide the efficient and cost-effective manner to attain disability inclusivity.
- d) To encourage all leadership to make this a priority in their church, and an outreach for their communities.
- e) To monitor and evaluate the needs of the UPCSA, to determine whether the existing array of programs/activities of People with Disabilities, should be modified or expanded.

The Survey of Data Collected

This is the data captured from the PWD Committee although this is a small sample of the entire denomination. It does give us valuable information that can assist the committee in being able to assist the congregations practically to make the denomination an inclusive one for People with Disabilities. We as a committee endeavor to approach presbyteries and the congregations thereby creating awareness of the need and that the General Assembly has made provisions for its members.

Presbytery	City/Town	Congregation	Members	Weekly Attendees	Minister	Session Clerk	Leadership Roles
Amathole	East London	Cambridge Presbyterian Ch	118	50	Michael Potgieter	David Rankin	0
Amathole	Adelaide	Adelaide Presbyterian	110	30	Mark Langston	Steve Cockcroft	0
eGoli	Midrand	Midrand Presbyterian Church	850	200	Rev. Christopher Judelsohn	Deon Griessel	2
eGoli	Johannesburg	Linden Presbyterian Church	158	80	Rev. Tobie Steyn	Nick Caldwell	0
eGoli	Kensington	Kensington United Church	21	21		Barbara Steynberg	0
Highveld	Benoni	St. Andrew's Community Ch	379	150	Robert Samson	Mike Barry	0
Highveld	Boksburg	St Mark's	550		Rev. G Vaaltyn	Michael Mokgohloa	0
Highveld	Germiston	St Andrew's Presbyterian Ch	100	80		Beverley Campbell	
Limpopo	Polokwane	Donhill Congregation	279		Rev. N.S Mohwibitsoane	Mosima Mogashoa	0
Limpopo	Thohoyadou	Matangari Congregation	370		Rev. Khonani Mukundi Maselane	S.R Nethengwe	1
Limpopo	Thohoyadou	Gooldville Mission	1500	335	Rev. DR. R Monthali	K. B. Matumba	0
Limpopo	Polokwane	Mount Horeb Congregation	378	120	Rev M. Ramulondi	Sybil Mphahlele	0
Limpopo	Polokwane	William Samson Memorial Congregation			Rev Awedzoni Nemaughwe	Makhudu Thema	0
Thekwini	Hillcrest	Hillcrest Presbyterian Famil	228	180	Rev, Brian Smith	Bevan Gibson-Taylor	0
Thekwini	Southbroom	Southbroom Church / T rafa	63	30	David T Humphrey	Juanita Fourie	1
Tshwane	Pretoria	St Columba's Presbyterian,	124	26	Rev Craig G. Morrison	R.D. Johnson	0
Western Cape	Durbanville. Cap	Durbanville Presbyterian Ch	382		Rev. Dr.Peter Lngerman	Ingo Kemper	1
Western Cape	Pinetown	Pinetown Presbyterian Chu	155		Rev. J Smith	Grant Hurley	0
Western Cape	Paarl	Paarl United Church				Ewald Moerman	0

Move ment	Ramp	Hand Rail	Wheelchair Entrance	Whailchair Toilets	Wheelchairs avalavle	Artificial limbs	Visual	Large Print	Audio	Hear	Head phones	Other	Remark	Total
0	1	1	1	1			0	1		0	0%	1	Autism	0%
6	20%	1	0	1	0		2	7%		0	5%	1	Midget	27%
15	8%	1	2	1	1		40	20%		10	0%	1	0	33%
0	0%	1	1	1	1		0	0%	1	0	0%	0		0%
1	5%	1	1	0	0		0	0%		0	3%	0		5%
5	3%	1	1	1	1		4	3%		5	####	3	Intelectu	9%
0	####	1	1	1	1		0	#DIV/0!	1	0	1%	0		#DIV/0!
4	5%	1	1	1	1		1	1%		1	####	0		8%
8	####	0	0	0	0	0	1	#DIV/0!		0	####	1	Autism.	#DIV/0!
10	####	1	0	1	0	0	2	#DIV/0!		10	0%	1	Midget	#DIV/0!
6	2%	1	1	1	1	1	1	0%		0	0%	0	Artifisial	2%
0	0%	0	1	1	1		0	0%	1	0	####	0		0%
24	####	0	0	1	0		11	#DIV/0!		11	10%	0		#DIV/0!
3	2%	1	1	1	1		10	6%		18	3%	0		17%
1	3%	0	1	0	0		0	0%		1	0%	0		7%
0	0%	1	1	1	1	2	0	0%		0	####	0		0%
6	####	1	1	1	1		4	#DIV/0!	1	0	####	0		#DIV/0!
0	####	0	0	1	1		0	#DIV/0!	1	0	####	1	0	#DIV/0!
0	####	0	0	0	0		0	#DIV/0!		0	####	0		#DIV/0!
0	####							#DIV/0!			####			#DIV/0!

A WRITE UP ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WORK SUBMITTED TO THE GA PERSONS WITH DISABILITY COMMITTEE: A CASE OF MASVINGO CONGREGATION IN THE PRESBYTERY OF ZIMBABWE:

Background.

In 2012 I co-founded Disability Amalgamation Community Trust (DACT) together with four other members with disabilities. I was appointed Executive Director since then. In 2022, I left full time employment to devote all my time to the organisation. We are housed at Masvingo Presbyterian Church where we initially rented an office for a fee until the last 2023 GA when a Standing Committee on Disability was approved. The Session of Masvingo then waived the rentals as a sign of wanting to promote Disability Ministry and further allocated a place to construct a disability-friendly toilet.

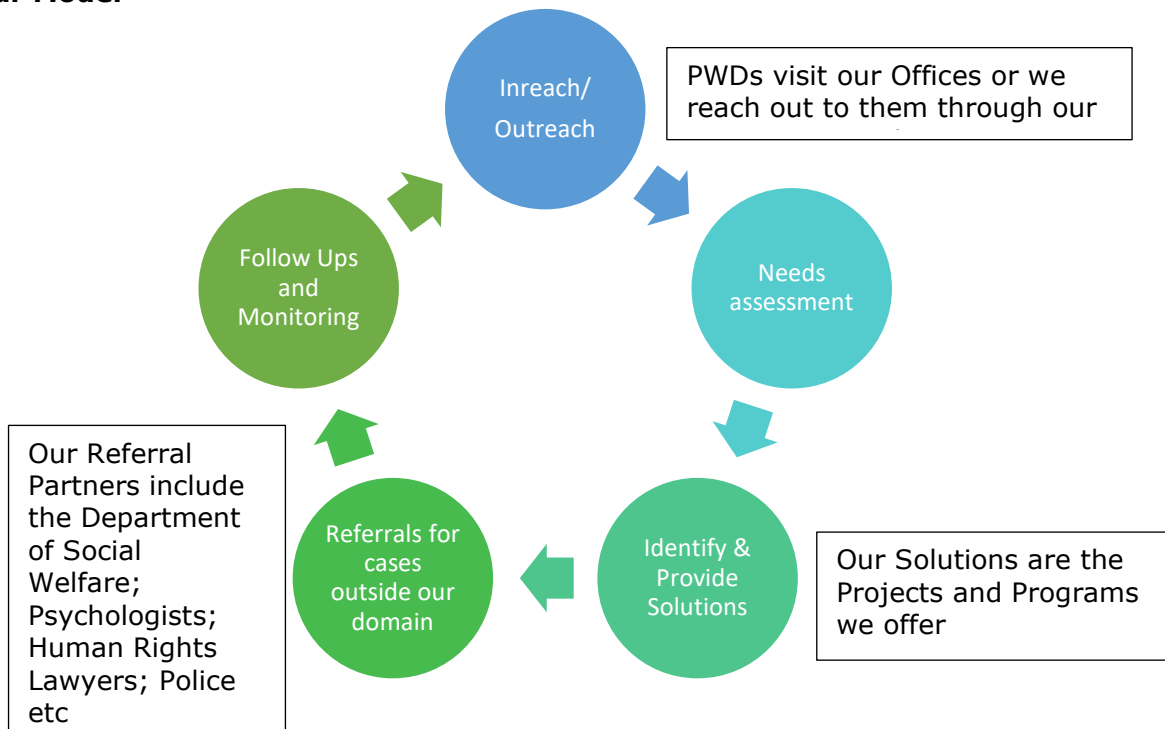
About DACT

DACT is a non-profit organisation that builds capacities and movements of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Zimbabwe for their enhanced participation in all aspects of life. We envision empowered PWDs that positively shape society as they enjoy their rights.

Our Work

We have more than 3500 members of various natures of disabilities who have affiliated with DACT from the seven Districts of Masvingo Province. We also have focal persons in the other 9 Provinces of Zimbabwe giving DACT a national outlook.

Our Model



Our Solutions/Projects

1. **Sharing the Gospel** – at the centre of our response is the Gospel. We expose PwDs to the Gospel when they come to our offices or during our Community Outreaches. We also conduct daily morning devotions with our members who are able to come to our offices together with our volunteer staff and interns. We also connect PwDs to the church through inviting them for worship services and providing support such as transport for those in need. However, this is limited sometimes due to lack of funds for fuel. We now have 6 PwDs who have been coming to church services albeit not as frequently as we would love to see. PwDs miss church and would love to worship God just like other people but are disabled by the environment.
2. **Compassion** – We respond to Jesus' call to '*Love your neighbour as you love yourself*' by responding directly to felt needs. This has included sourcing and donating wheelchairs; sourcing for educational bursaries on behalf of our members; and providing food and clothing
3. **Capacity Building** - mainly focused on the training of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), public office officials, chiefs and various other stakeholders on Disability Rights as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
4. **Education and Awareness** – We educate community leaders, community members, students, churches and various stakeholders on inclusion so as to reduce stigma and discrimination against PwDs
5. **Business Development** – The biggest challenge facing PwDs is lack of employment and business opportunities. We support PwDs to start businesses through providing business development services such as one-on-one coaching; business plan development; preparation of cash flow statements for loan applications; printing services; loan and grant applications and ongoing support through 'office hours'.

What are the Challenges preventing PWDs from coming to church?

1. **Physical accessibility challenges** - this stands as a foundational hurdle for many persons with disabilities. Architectural barriers such as steps, narrow doorways, and lack of ramps render places of worship inaccessible to individuals with mobility impairments. For instance, at Masvingo Congregation, we do not have toilets that have ramps that give support in the toilet and big enough for wheel chair users. Slippery floors also pose a huge risk.
Furthermore, sensory disabilities pose additional challenges, with inadequate lighting, acoustics, or visual aids impeding participation in worship services. These physical barriers not only limit access but also symbolically exclude individuals from fully engaging in the spiritual community.
2. **Attitudinal barriers** - these perpetuate the marginalization of persons with disabilities within the congregation. Prevalent stigmas and misconceptions often lead to the underestimation of the capabilities and spiritual needs of individuals with disabilities. As a result, they sometimes encounter condescension, pity, or even discrimination within the church community, hindering their sense of belonging and spiritual fulfilment.
3. **Lack of Sign Language** in church programmes including worship services also excludes PWDs from full participation in the life and work of the church.
4. **Lack of investment** in ministry specifically towards PWDs. As a result, outreach to PWDs at congregational level is largely unplanned, unbudgeted for and unsystematic.

How can we promote Disability Ministry as a GA Committee?

Here are some thoughts on how we can promote ministry towards PWD's as a committee, based on my lived experiences and interactions with fellow persons with disabilities:

1. Investment into Infrastructure that makes our buildings and spaces more inclusive and welcoming to PWDs. - For starters, all our congregations should have ramps for wheelchair access and toilets with ramps. This would demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity. This can be done through encouraging and providing support and guidance to congregations to be 'disability inclusive' in their budgeting so that they improve the infrastructure at the various churches.
2. Education and Awareness initiatives - at the core of creating more inclusive congregations, is the need to educate leaders and congregations on disability rights. This will help leaders and congregations to understand and be more sensitive towards the needs of their brothers and sisters with disabilities. This will also help eliminate stigma and discrimination. Our mantra at DACT is 'Disability Rights are Human Rights'.
3. Encourage Congregations to collaborate with Disability organisations in the local community who may have resources to help congregations improve accessibility. Congregations can also provide Ministry to such organisation and avail their buildings and facilities for use by PwDs and their organisations.
4. More "affluent" congregations can be encouraged to adopt smaller and less affluent congregations in their locality to help improve accessibility for PwDs.
5. I also propose that as a denomination, we set up a pilot project to develop model churches that are inclusive. This could start with 2 congregations in each Presbytery which GA could fund. The pilot project would be research based, looking at whether, enhancing accessibility; allocating a budget towards outreach and ministry to PWDs; establishing a partnership/relationship with local PWD organisations etc for a 1 year period, would improve the attendance and participations of PWDs in the life of their local church and in the community.
6. I also propose that Presbyteries setup a 'Disability Desk' - an office that coordinates and supports outreach and ministry to PWDs. At denomination level, I also propose

that the denomination employs an Inclusion Officer whose role is to support the Disability Desks and all the work across the denomination to enhance inclusion.

Conclusion

There is huge opportunity for ministry and outreach to PWDs. We normally talk about unreached people groups in the context of geography but sometimes, unreached people groups are in the same vicinity as ourselves. There is a huge opportunity for us as a denomination to heed the Great Commission and take the Good News to persons with disabilities in our communities. As a person with disability myself, my turning point was when believers came knocking on my door, over 35 years ago and shared the Gospel with me. They cared enough to intentionally reach out and support me in my journey as a new believer.

I believe the GA has taken a very bold and Godly step to include PwDs in earnest by having this committee. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to lead us as we explore the various possibilities. Peace, joy and love.

In the service of the Lord

Henry Chivhanga.

Proposals

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that the Committee is planning to engage with the presbyteries and the congregations.
3. The Executive Commission notes with concern the lack of handrails and ramps in the surveyed congregations and instructs all congregations to become compliant.
4. The Executive Commission notes that the Committee is following the work that is being done in Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

Jonathan Langerman

CONVENER

WORSHIP AND PASTORAL CARE CLUSTER

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Report to the Executive Commission of General Assembly 2024

The Worship Committee

Members appointed by the GA

Mike Muller (Convener), Kim Brown (Minute taker), Bonisile Mdyesha, Douglas Bax, Fuziwe Qithini, Hendry Fortuin, Masauso Nyirenda, Garikai Gwangwava, Lulama Mshumpela, Sibusiso Mkahize (no longer a member), Zephney Kennedy

Corresponding Members

Representatives from the Presbyteries

Co-opted Member

The Rev. Eleanor Gaunt

Goals of the Worship Committee

The goals of the Committee remain the same as stated in its 2022 report to the Executive Commission of the General Assembly.

Current Work

The Committee would normally meet every month via Zoom. Thanks to the Rev Kim Brown for hosting these meetings. However, circumstances arose leading to the Committee meeting on fewer occasions and only once this year. For this reason, not a lot of work has been completed since the 2023 General Assembly, and this report will be brief.

The Committee has before it the following work:

Work Ready for Submission

Questionnaire on Preaching. The General Assembly last year adopted a draft of this document and an introduction to it that were in our 2023 Report. After further consideration this has been revised and improved and is now being submitted in its revised form, together with a revised introduction setting out the rationale for it. See **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**. The appropriate proposals follow.

Unfinished Work in Progress

a) *An Order for Tenebrae.*

b) *A Directory of Worship.*

This would include chapters on, inter alia:

- *The Structure of Sunday Worship*
- *The Conduct of Worship*
- *Bodily Worship (adopted by the Assembly in 2016)*
- *How to Read the Bible in Church*
- *How to Lead Prayer in Church*
- *A List of Festivals and Seasons and their Colours*
- *Vestments (or What Ministers Should Wear)*

Work for Revision and Re-submission

a) *A Statement on Inter-Faith Worship [and Relations].*

Thanks

I would like to thank all those who diligently work on this committee and give of their time so generously.

MIKE MULLER

CONVENER

Email: convener.worship@unitingpresbyterian.org

PROPOSALS:

1. The Executive Commission receives the Report.
2. With regard to the *Questionnaire on Preaching*, the Executive Commission instructs the Clerk:
 - a) to send the section in the Report headed "Preaching: A Questionnaire and a Bibliography" together with the *revised* Questionnaire and Bibliography printed below in **Appendix B**. either by email or by post to every student for the ministry, probationer, minister, lay preacher and preaching Elder in the UPCSAs and urge them all to make use of both the questionnaire and the bibliography;
 - b) to see that the revised Questionnaire and the Bibliography on preaching are both placed on the UPCSAs website, prefaced by the section introducing them in this Report.
3. The Executive Commission instructs the Ministry Committee:
 - a) to investigate and report to the next Assembly the details of what training in homiletics and actual preaching the various institutions that train our students for the ministry provide for them;
 - b) to recommend the use of the Questionnaire to all these institutions;
 - c) to see that the revised Questionnaire is used in the training of every probationer in the UPCSAs; and to recommend the bibliography to every probationer in the UPCSAs.

Appendix A On Preaching: A Questionnaire and a Bibliography

There are some good and even some outstanding preachers in our denomination; but we need to recognize as well that many of the sermons preached in our churches could be much better than they are. On the other hand the society in which we live is an increasingly secularized society that is more resistant to the promotion of religion. Some sociologists even call it a "post-Christian society".¹

The reopening of our churches in the wake of the Covid pandemic makes this a particularly apposite time to think about the standard of preaching in the Church. For if the standard of preaching was a concern before Covid, it should be an even greater concern now that a number of former worshippers are not returning to our services and some do not even intend returning in the future. Besides which, of course, the commission to make disciples of all the nations remains our Lord's summons to us—however secularized the world may have become.

The question then is: *How can we raise the standard of preaching in our Church to win more people to Christ and lead them to be more faithful disciples?*

An obvious part of the answer to this question is that our students for the ministry should be taught and trained as adequately as possible in the theory and practice of preaching while they are at university or seminary and later during their probation. Most Churches that have emphasized the academic training of their students for the ministry have failed to put an equivalent emphasis on training in the practical side of the ministry, including preaching. This is surely a serious mistake, one that is too often evident in practice. But

¹ A BBC news report in Nov. 2022 provided a good example of advancing secularism. A religious census held in 2021 by the Office for National Statistics in the UK revealed that for the first time in a census fewer than half of the people in England and Wales identified themselves as Christian. Those who described themselves as Christian were down to 46.2%, compared with 59.3% in the previous such census in 2011. On the other hand those who said that they had no religion had increased from a quarter of the population to 37.2%. Those identifying as Muslim had risen from 4.9% in 2011 to 6.5% in 2021. The numbers are drastically declining in Europe as well. In France, for instance, a 2021 poll showed over half the population either to be atheist or to consider Christianity irrelevant. Those saying they had no religion had grown to 40%. In the Netherlands, the number of Calvinists and Methodists halved between the 1970s and the mid-2010s. A South African example of secularism is from the SA Department of Home Affairs: in 2021 just over 59% of marriages in SA were solemnised not in church but by department of home affairs marriage officers.

what about probationers and ministers already working in the parish? How can they be helped to make their preaching more effective? And what about the many lay preachers and preaching Elders in the UPCSA?

John A. Broadus in his standard work for preachers, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, makes four points in this regard:

- "Preaching is an art, and techniques may be improved. The preacher wants the best possible vehicle to convey his message."
- A minister "should have regular evaluation of his preaching" by a competent person and "listen to 'feedback' from his hearers. Comments of listeners are often discerning and helpful."
- The video recording of sermons helps to identify a preacher's strong and weak points;
- "Not only the ministerial student should study books on preaching; the active pastor should also read works on preaching to rekindle his love for preaching and to sharpen his skills."²

The Worship Committee has therefore given time and thought to:

- drafting and now redrafting a questionnaire on preaching that can facilitate feedback for preachers, and
- compiling a list of best books on preaching for preachers to study.

The questionnaire and the list of books are in **Appendix B**. They can be printed either together on one A4-size sheet in book fold format as a 4 page A5-size leaflet or else separately. Both the questionnaire and the booklist are commended to all our students for the ministry, probationers, lay preachers, preaching Elders and not least all our working ministers,. Preachers with fragile egos may shy away from the criticism, or advice, that the use of such a questionnaire offers; but those for whom the quality of their preaching is more important will welcome its use.

Besides using the leaflet for feedback, preachers should also record and listen to their own sermons or, better, video and so watch as well as hear themselves preaching, to see how well they communicate, what faults they have, what their idiosyncrasies may be and how they can improve their preaching. In these days of smart cell phones that can take videos this is easily done. They should also listen to a variety of the many preachers whose sermons are available online (e.g. Fred Craddock) and learn what they can from them.

We would also urge *Presbyteries* to recognize the responsibility they also have for the education and training of their ministers, probationers and lay preachers and to implement this responsibility by arranging talks and seminars for them on preaching, communication, evangelism, pastoral counselling and on the structure and conduct of worship.

² J.A Broadus: *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Harper& Row, 4th ed. 1979), p.11f.

How Can We Be More Effective Preachers?

A questionnaire for feedback and a bibliography for preachers

Produced by the UPCSA Worship Committee

Questionnaire for Feedback

“With its preaching Christianity stands or falls” (P.T. Forsyth). Good preaching has never been easy, but in our secularized, so-called post-Christian society in which it is claimed that “religion has become increasingly irrelevant for many” it is harder to make an impact; and Covid has aggravated the problem. The only solution is for us to become better preachers! But how? Good books on preaching can help. But *we also need feedback*, in order to know in what ways our own preaching needs to improve. This questionnaire has been drafted *to enable such feedback*. Its questions can help us to reflect on an already-prepared, or even an already-preached, sermon. But frank feedback from others is much more helpful, if only we are prepared to listen to it and learn from it. We can ask a few (preferably diverse) members of our congregations to answer the questions (each out of 10, or else just with a positive tick/negative cross). We can then meet with them to discuss their answers or, if it helps them be more candid, let them return their copies of the questionnaire anonymously.

Preacher’s Presence

1. Did the preacher dress neatly, in clothes that did not distract?
2. Did the preacher keep her/his hands and thumbs out of her/his pockets and away from his/her face?
3. Did s/he stand tall and refrain from clinging to the pulpit?.....

Biblical Basis

4. Was the sermon strictly based on, and faithful to, the Bible?.....
5. Did it both *explain the meaning of text in its context* and *apply it to life as it is today* (i.e. not just comment *on and around* the text or use it as a peg on which to hang ideas only loosely related to it)?

Christ-centredness and Gospel-centredness

6. *Was the sermon Christocentric, so that in and through the text*

- Jesus Christ himself confronted its hearers (I Cor.2:2, 15:1ff.)?*
7. Did it make clear the seriousness of sin but also the love of God, the unconditional grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit's power to save?
8. Did it seek to win people for Christ, not just tell them what to do?

Structure

9. Was any introduction or background information kept short and to the point?
10. Did the sermon end at the right point, not meander on too long?
11. Did the sermon have a clear basic argument, an overarching structure, and a single focus in the end?

Rhetoric

12. Did the preacher speak audibly and articulate clearly?.....
13. Did s/he capture attention at the start and maintain it to the end?
14. Did the preacher not just *read* but *preach* the sermon, i.e. speak in a lively, *varied* tone of voice and use *occasional* emphasis and *appropriate pauses* to express mood, feeling and drama?
15. Did s/he speak in a natural, relaxed and measured voice, not too fast and not staccato?
16. Did s/he *talk to the* congregation, as one sinner to others, *not declaim or preach at* them, let alone *preach down* to them?
17. Did s/he maintain eye contact with her/his hearers (i.e. look directly at them more than at any script, notes or tablet)?.....
18. Did s/he speak earnestly and indeed with passion, "as a dying man to dying men" (Richard Baxter cf. St Paul in II Cor. 5:20)?
19. Did the preacher avoid grammatical mistakes?
20. Did s/he avoid theological or academic jargon, and use simple words and uncomplicated sentences (I Cor. 1:17-25, 2:1-5)?
21. Did s/he avoid "ums", "ers", "ahs"—and too many "ands"?.....
22. Did the preacher lace his/her sermon with a little humour?.....
23. Did s/he use varied and appropriate gestures, but not too many?

Relevance and Application

24. Did the sermon avoid being abstract and apply the particular text to the concrete reality of life as the listeners experience it today?
25. Did the preacher address both the personal and any social/national issues in the text (in the light of Christ's universal Lordship)?
26. Did the preacher use enough apt illustrations and tell them well?
27. Did the sermon end with a clear call or challenge for personal repentance, commitment and/or action?

Other Comments

28. What other comments or suggestions would you make?
-

Basic Books on Preaching

Books on preaching can also be a huge help to preachers. Every preacher should study the standard works. Below are some older classics (with their dates of publication or republication) and, after them, some highly commended more modern works.

Abbey, M.R. *Communication in Pulpit and Parish*(Westminster, 1973)
 Broadus, J.A. *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*(Solid Ground, 2004)
 Browne, R.E.C. *The Ministry of the Word* (Fortress, 1976)

- Davis, H. Grady *Design for Preaching* (Fortress, 1958)
 Fant, C.E. *Preaching for Today* (Harper & Row, 1977)
 Forsyth, P.T. *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*(New Creation, 1993)
 D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones *Preaching and Preachers* (H. & S., 1971)
 Robinson, H.W. *Biblical Preaching* (Baker, 1980)
 Sangster, W.E. *The Craft of Sermon Construction* (Baker, 1972)
 Sangster, W.E. *The Craft of Sermon Illustration* (Baker, 1972)
 Scherer, P. *For We Have This Treasure* (Harper & Bros., 1944)
 Spurgeon, C.H. *Lectures to my Students* (Banner of Truth, 2011)
 Stewart, J.S. *Heralds of God* (Baker, 1972)
 Sweazey, G.E *Preaching the Good News* (Prentice-Hall, 1976)
- Boyd-Macmillan, R. *Explosive Preaching* (Paternoster, 2006)
 Chapell, B. *Christ-Centered Preaching* (Baker, 1994)
 Chapman, J. *Setting Hearts on Fire* (Matthias Media, 1999)
 Craddock, F.B. *As One without Authority* (Chalice, 2001, 4th ed.)
 Davis, E.F. *Preaching the Luminous Word*(WB Eerdmans, 2016)
 Ellsworth, W. *The Power of Speaking God's Word*(Mentor, rev. ed. 2001)
 Keller, T. *Preaching. Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*(Viking, 2015)
 Koller, C.W. *How to Preach without Notes* (Baker, 2007)
 Kuruvilla, A. *Privilege the Text. A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Moody, '13)
 Miller, C. *Preaching. The Art of Narrative Exposition* (Baker, 2010)
 Vines, J., and Shaddix, J. *Power in the Pulpit* (Moody, 1999)

“Preachers learn to preach by studying those who do it well” (G.E. Sweazey). Some celebrated volumes of sermons to study and learn from are:

- Blackwood, A.W. *The Protestant Pulpit. An Anthology* (Baker, 1977)
 Bonhoeffer, D. *Worldly Preaching* (ed. by C.E. Fant)(Nelson, 1975)
 Coffin, H.S. *God's Turn* (Harper & Bros, 1934)
 Craddock, F.B. *The Cherry Log Sermons* (Westminster John Knox, 2001)
 King, M.L. Jnr *Strength to Love* (Harper & Row, 1963)
 Marshall, P. *Mr Jones, Meet the Master* (Fleming H. Revell, 1949)
 Stewart, J.S. various titles.

Note: The internet also offers examples of good sermons and instruction on public speaking. For a good free course of 10 lessons on effective public speaking designed by the University of Washington see: www.edx.org/course/introduction-to-public-speaking-2

HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE (HWC) TO THE 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Wellbeing can be defined as a dynamic process of change and growth, a state of physical, social, emotional, occupational, spiritual, financial, and intellectual well-being. Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and can make a contribution to his or her community. The Health and Wellness Committee (HWC) is led by the vision of the UPCSA, to be a reconciled community of Christians exercising a prophetic witness to Christ. The ministry of the HWC aims to support the vision and core values of the UPCSA by promoting health, preventing illness, and impacting health care in our communities through information sharing, health education and developing strategies to promote wholistic well-being of our denomination and communities at large.

As a committee, we are grateful to the UPCSA for granting us the opportunity and honour of serving and worshipping God in this manner. We wish to thank the denomination at large for their continued support, interest and inputs into the work of the committee. We wish to thank in particular the staff at the central office who continues to give guidance and support as we journey together in service.

It gives us pleasure to present this progress report for the period 2023/2024.

2. COMPOSITION

The following are members of the HWC: Ms Yolisa Bomela, Rev Graham Fryer, Mrs Nomlibo Jacobs, Mrs Inonge Kasaro, Mrs Matshidiso Mamabolo (secretary), Mrs Nomakhaya Matutu, Ms Nosisa Mkosana, Ms Nombeko Mpongo (Assistant Secretary), Mrs Pauline Mushayavanhu and Dr Nomzi Zibi-Hlophe(convener).

The committee received and accepted the resignation of Mr Luzuko Bunu who has not been replaced. The committee therefore has 10 members in total, with different professional backgrounds which provides valuable insights into the work of the committee.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee has deliberated on and is putting into action the following terms of reference:

- f) To provide a common strategic direction for health and wellness to the UPCSA.
- g) To provide care and support that is driven by love, acceptance and free of stigma through educational and outreach activities.
- h) To promote Health and Wellness through developing programs/activities for Presbyteries and Congregations.
- i) To provide a comprehensive range of health, behavioral, pastoral, and supportive programs to promote health and wellness.
- j) To build strong leadership that promotes and supports moral values which foster healing and hope.
- k) To collaborate with all relevant stake holders, Service providers, and other ecumenical organizations.
- l) To monitor and evaluate needs of the UPCSA to determine if the existing array of programs/activities on Health and Wellness should be modified or expanded.

4. STRATEGIC GOALS

The committee has identified the following as key priority areas. Of note is the addition of Mental health as a priority area.

- a) Mental Health
- b) HIV and AIDS
- c) TB Management

- d) Cancer Awareness
- e) Wellness Management

The key objective of the committee is to implement the strategic framework which provides integrated needs-driven and holistic approach to health and wellness within the UPCSA.

5. ACTIVITIES OF THE YEAR (2023/2024)

An activity plan and schedule of meetings for the year 2024 is attached to the report as Annexures A and B respectively.

5.1. MEETINGS

The committee met virtually on zoom during the year 2023/2024 for planning purposes as follows:

- a) 24 August 2023
- b) 19 November 2023
- c) 07 March 2024

The committee, through the Clerk of Assembly, requested all presbyteries to submit to HWC their Presbytery HW committee conveners by 30 September 2023(Annexure C). Thus far a total of 6 Presbyteries have responded i.e.: Copperbelt, Drakensberg, Tiyo Soga, Tshwane, Western Cape, and Zimbabwe. The committee has had some personal challenges befall our members and this has had an impact on the work of the committee. We are yet to meet with Presbytery conveners. Our Activity plan was finalised in March and this is now being communicated to the presbytery conveners

5.2. Webinars

5.2.1. Hypertension and Diabetes Awareness

The webinar was held on the 27th of November 2023 on the Zoom platform and was well-attended and informative

Facilitator: Ms Nombeko Mpongo

Speaker: Dr Nomzi Zibi-Hlophe

Dr Zibi-Hlophe, the HWC convener is a specialist physician and head of the Internal Medicine Dept at Ngwelezana Tertiary Hospital in Kwazulu-Natal. She presented the two topics well and was easy to understand, creating dialogue within the session. There was a request made to have ongoing education on these two major health issues.

5.2.2. World Aids Day Commemoration

The event was held on the 3rd of December 2023 on the Zoom platform and was very well attended.

Faciliator: Dr Nomzi Zibi-Hlophe

Speaker 1: Dr Lulu Nair

Dr Nair is the Principal Investigator for clinical trials in Desmond Tutu HIV Centre. She shared new treatment options on the horizon and new perspectives on HIV management.

Speaker 2: Ms Siphe Tyawana

Ms Tyawani works with Emthonjeni Groundforce and conducts workshops for adolescent girls and young women. She gave an insightful talk on her personal insights of living with HIV in the church.

Speaker 3: Mr Zwebuka Khumalo

Mr Khumalo is the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at the South African National Aids Council, Durban office. He gave a well presented analysis of the statistics around HIV treatment and testing in the country.

5.2.3. Mental Health Awareness

The session was held on the 13th December 2023 on the Zoom platform and was very well attended. The theme was "Your Mental Health and the Festive Season". The session was highly informative and was very well received.

Faciliator: Rev Dr Wonke Buqa

Speaker 1: Mrs Phillipine Ouma Marishane

Mrs Marishane is an experienced social worker with over 27yrs experience and now in private practise. She shared insights on managing family relations and expectations during the festive season.

Speaker 2: Mrs Mandisa Ndabula-Mgwebi

Mrs Ndabula-Mgwebi is a Counselling Psychologist currently employed as manager of student wellness at Rhodes University. She gave practical advice on managing and maintaining mental wellness through the festive season.

Speaker 3: Dr Sibongile Mpongwana-Ncetani

Dr Mpongwana-Ncetani is a Specialist psychiatrist in private practise in Cape Town. She enthusiastically shared insights into the importance of treatment adherence as well as managing wellness even if away from usual health district.

5.2.4. Tuberculosis Awareness

The webinar was hosted on the Zoom platform on the 7th April 2024 in commemoration of World TB Day which was on the 24th of March 2024.04.09

Facilitator: Dr Nomzi Zibi-Hlophe

Speaker: Rev Dr Bukelwa Hans

Dr Hans, with her extensive knowledge of Tuberculosis shared a very insightful, easy to follow presentation on what Tuberculosis is as well as the spread of infection and treatment strategies.

6. PRESBYTERY REPORTS

To the best of the committee's knowledge, many presbyteries do not have Health and Wellness committees/conveners. We have had responses from 6 presbyteries to inform us of their conveners. The committee intends to work with these presbyteries while encouraging the denomination to establish health and wellness committees in presbyteries and congregations across the denomination. Due to challenges experienced by the committee. We regret to report that we did not manage to solicit reports from all presbyteries. Of note, all the denominational fellowship conferences were supported by health desks on site which have been a welcome endeavour.

7. CONCLUSION

The committee is appreciative of the opportunity to serve and impact health within the denomination and beyond. We recognize the need for collaboration with presbyteries and congregation and the importance of information cascade to members on the ground. In order to assist the committee to position itself for maximal impact, the committee is embarking on a denomination wide skills audit(Annexure E). Knowing who is in our congregations and more especially who is willing to raise their hand to be a resource to the HWC will make the work of the committee and presbyteries that much easier. The committee is ready to assist presbyteries with strategies to forming a working relationship with departments of health at district levels in order to capitalise our weekly gatherings to bring certain services closer to the people. We are stronger together indeed.

The convener expresses her heartfelt appreciation to the members of the GA HWC for their dedication and commitment to the work of the committee. Let us not tire of doing good team. Well done!

Dr Nomzi Zibi-Hlophe

Convener - Health and Wellness Committee

Proposals

1. Executive Commission receives the report
2. Executive Commission instructs Presbyteries that do not have Health and Wellness Committees to establish same.
3. Executive Commission urges Presbyteries to comply with the decision of 2023 General Assembly which read as follows:

a.
b.

- Executive Commission instructs all Presbyteries to submit the details of their Presbytery conveners to the GA HWC convener by 31 July 2024
4. Executive Commission encourages members of the UPCSA with health sector skills and knowledge to make themselves known to the GA HWC by participating in the skills audit by completing their details onto the form attached as Annexure D
6. Executive Commission notes the HWC Activity Plan for the year 2024 attached as Annexure A.
7. Executive Commission notes the HWC 2024 schedule of meetings attached as Annexure B.

Annexure A: Activity Plan 2024



**UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE (HWC)
ACTIVITY PLAN 2024**

NO	DATE AND MONTH	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE/ COLLABORATION
1.	24 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Tuberculosis Day (Webinar) • Eye Health (Write-up) • Cholera (Write-up) 	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
2.	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulmonary Embolism /Aneurysm (Write-up) • Malaria (Write-up) 	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
3.	May 2024	<p>UPCSA HEALTH MONTH FUN WALK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different venues in all Presbyteries • Mens Sexual Health • Mental Health 	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
4.	June 2024	<p>Youth Month: HIV Awareness Campaign</p> <p>** Executive Commission</p>	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
4.	July 2024	<p>MENTAL ILLNESS/MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presbyteries encouraged to host an event that raises Mental Health Awareness • GAHWC WEBINAR to kick off mental health awareness campaign 	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
	August 2024	Autism Awareness Webinar	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
5.	September 2024	Rabies (veterinary services) Webinar	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners

6.	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer Awareness Month (writeup) • Bone and joint disease (writeup) 	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
7.	14 November 2024	<p>DIABETES AWARENESS CAMPAIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In commemoration of World Diabetes Day 14/11/2023 • Webinar • Congregations to invite someone to talk on Diabetes • Screening campaign: glucose checks, urine checks where feasible 	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners
8.	01 December 2024	World AIDS Day	GA HWC Presbytery HWC Conveners

**"I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me."
(Philippians 4:13)**

Health Today, Wellness Forever.

Annexure B: Meeting Schedule 2024



**GENERAL ASSEMBLY & PRESBYTERY HEALTH AND
WELLNESS COMMITTEE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS
2024**



NO.	DATE	TIME	PLATFORM	RESPONSIBLE
1.	07.03.2024	18.30-20.00	Zoom	Convener & Secretary
2.	09.05. 2024	18.30-20.00	Zoom	Convener & Secretary
3.	04.07. 2024	18.30-20.00	Zoom	Convener & Secretary
4.	05.09. 2024	18.00-20.00	Zoom	Convener & Secretary
5.	07.11. 2024	18.00-20.00	Zoom	Convener & Secretary
6.	05.12. 2024	18.00-20.00	Zoom	Convener & Secretary

**"I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me."
(Philippians 4:13)**

Health Today. Wellness Forever.

Annexure C: Letter to Presbyteries



The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

05-September-2023

To:

The Presbytery Clerks
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

From:

The Convener
General Assembly Health and Wellness Committee

**RE: Assembly Decision: Establishment of Health and Wellness
Committees by 30th September 2023**

I greet you brothers and sisters in the most wonderful name of our Lord and personal Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I would like to bring to your attention the following decisions of General Assembly 2023 regarding Health and Wellness Committee:

- "The General Assembly instructs Presbyteries that have not complied with the establishment of Health and Wellness Committees to do so by the 30th September 2023. *This was agreed by consensus*".
- "The General Assembly encourages Presbytery HWC to submit reports to the GA HWC as required. *This was agreed by consensus*".

The General Assembly Health and Wellness Committee (GAHWC) urges you therefore to kindly assist the committee by forwarding the name and contact details of the Presbytery Convener for Health and Wellness Committee to the General Assembly Convener of Health and Wellness Committee(contact details below).

We greatly appreciate your co-operation and assistance and look forward to working together with your presbytery convener for the wellness of our denomination.

Sincerely

Dr Nomzi Zibi-Hlophe

Convener: General Assembly Health and Wellness Committee

Email: zibitjie@yahoo.com

Cell: 0824296697

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Annexure D: UPCSA Health and Wellness Skills Audit Form (Google Form)



GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

UPCSA Health and Wellness Committee Skills Audit

- The General Assembly Health and Wellness Committee would like to identify health sector skills within the UPCSA
- Please complete the form as completely as you can
- The aim of this form is to identify individuals who can be a resource to their presbyteries as we work together to implement the key strategic goals of Health and Wellness within our denomination
- Email queries to: upcsahealth.wellness@gmail.com

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

* Indicates required question

Form Link: <https://forms.gle/U2NSNGorouhZBguu5>

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

REPORT TO THE 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

The Committee has premised its work on the objectives of the Stewardship Committee as laid down in the document entitled: ***"Reflections on the Biblical and theological background to the Vision and Mission Priorities of the UPCSA"***.

The objectives as laid out in the document are as follows:

- ***To advocate for equitable sharing of resources***
- ***To prepare and develop church leadership and stewards to be able to handle stewardship programs (leadership development). Leadership development remains a glaring need if we are to attain our vision.***
- ***To empower, support, and strengthen congregations for growth and sustainable ministry.***
- ***To create more awareness on issues such as ecology, environment and climate change.***

The Committee has endeavored to build on the work started by the previous committee with a strong focus on establishing and institutionalizing Stewardship Committees within Presbyteries and Congregations. The Committee discerned the difficulty of implementing a strong stewardship program within the UPCSA in a vacuum. To this end, the Committee encouraged Presbyteries to appoint Stewardship Committees and share the details with the Assembly Committee, a process that seemed easy but proved daunting as Presbyteries met quarterly. The process has fully evolved in recent months.

The Committee can report to the Executive Commission that each member of the Committee has been assigned to a Presbytery, and each Presbytery has appointed a convener or a committee to work with the General Assembly committee.

Institutionalizing the work of stewardship in this way will hold all structures accountable and facilitate the generation of reports regularly and monitoring of decisions of the General Assembly relating to a covenantal relationship between Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods (where applicable), and the General Assembly.

The Committee is of the view that governance within Presbyteries on matters relating to stewardship has to be strengthened, and it is Presbyteries themselves that will push for the achievement of this tall order. It is not that Congregations cannot afford to meet their Missional Contributions for example, the problem is with Presbyteries' willingness to participate and enforce this as in other aspects of church life and work.

Issues of stewardship form an integral part of the February Council Meetings which focus on administration. It must be pointed out that not all Presbyteries still pay special focus during the February meetings, the report to the Presbytery (Appendix D3) is never analyzed and its implications are discussed. Failure to mainstream these issues to the Presbytery agenda almost collapses any stewardship agenda no matter how best it can be. The Committee will revitalize through Clerks and Stewardship Committees' commitment of Presbyteries to holding Congregations accountable in terms of their mission contributions to the General Assembly and reporting participation and non-participation to the General Assembly and Executive Commission regularly.

The Committee is working under the assumption that once the work of stewardship is institutionalized within Presbyteries, mechanisms will be built to cascade it down to Congregations and Fellowships.

The second focus of the Committee is a continuation of the work of establishing a framework for stewardship for the UPCSA. The work of the framework will be reported to the General Assembly as it would have reached completion.

Proposals

1. That the Executive Commission receives the report.
2. That the Executive notes progress on the establishment of stewardship in the Presbytery Councils.
3. That the Executive Commission notes progress in developing a framework for implementation.

PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024

The Priorities and Resources Committee is under the Worship and Pastoral Cluster convened by Reverend Faresy Sakala.

Members of the Committee 2023-24

Dr Kefiloe Masiteng(Convener); Rev Lydia Neshangwe, Dr Amon Kasambala, Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, Rev Vusi Mkhungo, Rev Mzwamadoda Mtyhobile, Mr Ryan Johnson, Rev Iain Kemp, Rev Chris Judelsohn, Rev Heidi Pietersen, Rev Bongwe Ngebulana, Rev Thembinkosi Nopapaza, Rev Talkmore Chilanga, Rev Sauros Phaika, Mr Pedzisai Sakuhuni; Ms Sarah Masekela and Mr Sisa Mtwana.

The committee has held meetings scheduled on the following dates:

12 September 2023, 9 October 2023, 7 November 2023, 30 January 2024, 20 February 2024 (Special meeting) and 19 March 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Our moderator, Rev Lydia Neshangwe has done an appraisal for our church and how far we have come. From **2 Chronicles 7:14** **"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land"** She attests that our church is well resourced with the buildings, people and a variety of resources. We have experienced people, a variety of expertise, educated people, great church personnel, and leadership positions, at all levels. On planning our church has a governance model, boast-worthy strategic plan, 9 enviable mission guidelines, and seven Ministry areas. We remain blessed with a financial system that has maintained us thus far, though more needs to be done under the constrained financial resources.

She identified our challenges and concluded that our root cause where we struggle to move forward remains spirituality. Mirroring of politics, "standards of the world," abuses, conflict, divisions as well as declines, quantitative and qualitative. In her conclusion, we continue to need to be "Stronger together" for a spiritual revival.

Thank you, Moderator, for this appraisal of our church.

The Priorities and Resources Committee of the General Assembly has been tasked to support the Executive and the other committees to deal with matters that need focus and to be prioritised by the church.

The year 2023 has been a year in which operations have become somewhat normal in many aspects, with a push toward full recovery and stabilization or normalisation. Having been encouraged by the erstwhile Moderator, to first to go back to basics and secondly to build back better. The moderator encouraged the Committee from the book of Psalm 135 Vs 1 *"Those who trust in God will not be moved, like Mount Zion"*.

Having gone back to the Basics and in our quest to Build better, the current Moderator inspired the committee with the theme 'Stronger Together' in the first committee meeting and read from **Romans 15: 5-6** that the committee should be driven by God's spirit in its work, and being of one mind cognizant of the diversities that exist.

Under all circumstances, the promise is that we shall never be moved and that we are stronger together and able to achieve more. The promise is that we will have stability, anchoring our prayers and casting our eyes on God, we shall not be moved, and we are stronger together. Our trust is always in the Lord who has never left us nor forsaken us. Amen.

The church has learned and navigated challenging times which had affected congregations and is still in recovery mode to ensure the financial sustainability of the denomination, more so that some members are now having to struggle with unemployment in these challenging times. We have indeed learned on how to do things differently from the conventional method of how the denomination has been operating for a historical period. Presbyterians are steadfast and navigating these challenging times and ensuring that we succeed in our endeavours.

Out of the initiative we have progressed in building and seeing ourselves as one church across the presbyteries. 1 Corinthians 12:12 *"There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make one body. It is the same with Christ."*

2. STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW – 2021-2026

The process of reviewing the Strategic Plan was undertaken with a Task Team appointed to ensure that the comments and inputs from stakeholders (Presbyteries/ Committees) would be consolidated so that the final document could be shared with the entire Denomination.

The committee also felt strongly that there should be a column included so that the committees/ Presbyteries could indicate progress on the implementation of the guidelines

to measure progress made and develop interventions where necessary.

From the discussions, the committee also resolved to have a marketing/ advocacy plan to ensure that the guidelines are made simpler to understand by all members of the congregation to create excitement and interest and be easily implemented.

The final reviewed Strategic Plan document has been shared with General Assembly Committees and Presbyteries and to be shared with the entire denomination.

3. GA Decisions

The Committee reflected on the GA Decisions and an action plan was developed with progress indicated as to what has been done/ achieved and is attached hereto as **Annexure A.**

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GA COMMITTEES

The terms of reference for General Assembly Committees were circulated to the committees to review/ revise them. New committees were requested to develop their terms of reference to consolidate and prepare for submission to the Executive Commission. The final reviewed Terms of reference have been circulated to committees. The final product will be included in the Supplementary Papers.

The Priorities and Resources Committee also reviewed their Terms of Reference and developed a work plan that will enable the implementation of its responsibilities as indicated below.

P & R Terms of Reference workplan

1. To consider the priorities and resources of the UPCSA General Assembly and appropriate ways of applying these resources.	June 2024/ Executive Commission
2. To help the UPCSA to engage in continuing personal, corporate, theological, missiological and structural renewal.	Ongoing
3. To challenge the UPCSA to respond to the Spirit’s leading by bringing to the Assembly from time to time what it believes to be a word from the Lord concerning its life, work and witness.	Every General Assembly

4. To formulate budgeting guidelines, in accordance with any discerned vision and/or mission priorities, approved by the Assembly.	June 2024 and in consultation with the Finance Committee.
5. On its own or in conjunction with other committees, as General Assembly directs, to plan and organize a biennial conference for all ministers of the UPCSA.	Biennially starting from 2025
6. From time to time on its own initiative or at the General Assembly's request, and in consultation with the Assembly Business Committee, to review the methods of debate and decision making in the Assembly and other Councils of the UPCSA.	Ongoing

5. DEALING WITH CHALLENGES FACING THE DENOMINATION

Building the denomination and our church

The committee is working with M & D on Going for Growth and will continue supporting and journeying with the committee.

UPCSA as a Trans-national church

This looked at the life and work of the church across the regions and asked "How do we truly become a One Church embracing racial diversity, cultural diversity, transnationality, economic diversity and disparity". This is a work in progress and a Task Team was established.

Overture on Transnationality

The overture was sent to Presbyteries for their inputs/ comments and 8 Presbyteries submitted their responses (Western Cape, Zimbabwe, Drakensberg, Munali, M'chinga, Egoli, Highveld, and Copperbelt). A consolidated report with recommendations will be submitted on the supplementary report.

Financial sustainability

Reviewed the financial report and guidelines received, the church is still struggling financially and would need to implement some measures to prioritize expenditure to be sustainable.

Budget guidelines have been circulated to committees and budget requests that have been received far exceed what is available and priorities need to be identified to avoid a deficit. The reliance on Ministry Contributions is not enough and thus we as a church need to relook at other ways to generate income to be financially sustainable. The discussion will be continued with the Finance Committee.

Measuring/Monitoring General Assembly decisions taken for the Committees and Presbyteries and measuring progress for implementation.

The Committee is in the process of developing a monitoring and evaluation tool that will assist Committees and Presbyteries in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Terms of Reference. The Presbyteries may also adopt the tool for monitoring and evaluation.

Integrate and work with Church Fellowships

The committee is currently working on the interface with the fellowships committee, and this is a work in progress.

Job Description for Administrators

Presbyteries were requested to share the Job descriptions of their administrators and no response was received to the request. An attempt has again been made to request from the Presbytery of Western Cape and Zimbabwe to develop a generic Job description.

6. LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Committee is currently working on the recommendations for the church governance and structures to submit to the General Assembly next year.

7. UPCS@ 25

The Committee recognises the 25 Years as a milestone. A task team was established and a report will be submitted in the Supplementary papers.

8. WORKING WITH GENDER DESK

Formal relations have been established and a meeting is still to be convened to ensure sustainable working relations between the committees to ensure that a structure for truth and reconciliation in the church on matters of gender and justice issues is established.

9. Proposals

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the work done concerning the reviewed Strategic Plan (2021-2026)
3. The Executive Commission adopts the reviewed Terms of Reference for GA committees as per Annexure A.
4. Executive Commission notes that the work on Transnationality is in progress and will report a full report at the next General Assembly.

Yours in Service

Dr Kefiloe Masiteng: Convener

**PREACHING
AND
TEACHING
CLUSTER**

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE.

Mission and Discipleship Committee

MissionAndDiscipleshipCommitteeReportToExComm2024

Introduction

The Mission and Discipleship Committee's key focus currently is the "Going for Growth Project". For the last 18 months, the Convener has been doing presentations for anyone who will listen that the focus of Going for Growth is: **Sowing, Growing, Reaping**. These three slides tell the story:

The image shows three slides with a background of golden wheat stalks. Each slide has a title and a list of bullet points.

- SOWING**
Starting New Work
 - Planting a New Outstation
 - Planting a New Congregation**Or Something a Little Different**
 - Starting a Workshop for people needing career advice or guidance about managing their finances
 - Starting a Sports Club for Children around the Church
 - Identify a work in the community that your congregation can do
 - Do a clean-up of the Community but regularly so that others notice
- GROWING**
Focussed on Your Local Congregation
 - Jesus said: "I will build my CHURCH" So draw close to Him.
 - Identity Preaching
 - Do Bible Studies and workshops to understand the Church's mission and the role that members and fellowships play in it
 - Formulate the Vision and Mission of the Congregation and Fellowships around that.
 - Develop a healthy financial policy and ethos.
- REAPING**
Focussing on Evangelism
 - Become deeply immersed in the Gospel. Understand the power and the implications of the Gospel. Use tools like Mission Shaped Introduction from Fresh Life.
 - Become equipped in sharing the Gospel
 - Luke 10 Transformation (L10T) <http://luke10t.com>
 - Alpha Course
 - Then start doing the Outreaches
 - One to One Evangelism
 - But also the "Sowing" outreaches suggested earlier
 - Create a Visitor-Friendly Service.

Our Committee

Our committee is made up of: Jackie Barker, Victor Letuka, Zolani Makalima (Bible Society Rep), Richard Makandawire, Brian Mazanhi, Mzwamadoda Mfene, Mokgadi Modiba, Godfrey Msiska, Matshidiso Piroe, Eddie Stopforth, Wayne Van Heerden, Theo Groeneveld

We have also co-opted: Hein Barnard, Colin Campbell, Stewart Gordon, George Marchinkowski

We were devastated at the passing of Rev Mathemba Tati in March 2024. Mathemba was an enthusiastic member of our committee who pioneered the use of the L10T Evangelism Tool which he and some members of the Men's Fellowship used in door to door evangelism on the eve of the UPCSA's birthday assembly. We will miss his warmth and enthusiasm greatly.

The committee has met four times online since our last report and will meet once more before Assembly. There are a number of sub-committees which take on responsibilities for various projects and they meet regularly too. We are grateful that there is a high level of participation and involvement in our meetings and people step up to help get the work done.

Key Achievements since Assembly 2023

- Launch of "Future Focus" (A congregational self-evaluation tool) was positive.
- The Going for Growth initiative was promoted at the PAT Aug Conference 2023.
- Going for Growth was introduced to new Conveners of UPCSAs Committees.
- Going for Growth presentations were done at Amathole, Highveld, Tshwane and Egoli.
- Zimbabwe Presbytery ran 3 regional Going for Growth Consultations (East, West and South Central)
- Zambia: Fellowship Conferences in Aug-Sep themed on Going for Growth
- We have printed a hard copy Going for Growth poster for every congregation and outstation and are distributing them. (See picture)
- In October we ran another successful Month of Mission devotional series with preaching outlines for the Sundays.
- We have added additional ministries to our OLM portfolio and have had numerous new candidates apply and have also seen a number of candidates complete the course and being set apart while others have progressed on their journey through our foundations course.
- A Going for Growth Presentation was made at the National Men's Fellowship Conference.
- MAD ran an hour on the Prayer Vigil on 9 Dec
- We ran online Presbytery Convener Training – 24 Jan. This is also available on our website.
- A second Going for Growth Presentation was made to Tshwane Presbytery
- The Convener met with P&R to help fit Going for Growth into the plan of the UPCSAs
- Meetings with the Moderator on implementing Going for Growth have been held.
- Our 2024-2025 Budget was submitted timeously

GOING FOR GROWTH
 Sowing, Growing, Reaping
 A Decade of Growth
 2022-2032



**The harvest is plentiful
 but the workers are few...
 Ask the Lord of the
 harvest, therefore,
 to send out workers
 into his harvest field.**

Be part of our Denomination's Focus

SOWING: Starting New Work

GROWING: Strengthening Congregations

REAPING: Reaching out to others

Learn, Pray and Get Involved

Visit: www.upcsa-mad.org.za for info

- A Presentation on Going for Growth was made to the 2024 Probationers
- A Presentation done to the DCE's of the various fellowships in tandem with the Moderator in March.
- We have drafted a guideline for shared ministry which has also been referred to the Manual Committee for incorporation into our Manual.
- We're exploring strategic alliances with Bible Society, Alpha and Emmaus Walks.
- A couple of significant plans are in the pipeline:
 - Another online Inspire Conference in Pentecost week entitled: "Be the growth you want to see." (Wed 15 & Thu 16 May 2024)
 - Face to Face Conferences with Lindsay Armstrong from the PCUSA in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg in June
 - A handbook for Interim Moderators
 - A five part Discipleship Bible Study to be rolled out in congregations and fellowships. This will cover the vital areas of Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, Witnessing and Obedience to the Spirit.

WHAT'S THE SECRET SAUCE?

Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. Matt 13: 16

Let's explore the "secret sauce" or key characteristics of churches who are doing something new, and thriving in this season in the Christian community.

Tuesday 4 June | From 9.30am
Bellville Presbyterian Church

Thursday 6 June | From 9.30am
Glenwood Presbyterian Church

Tuesday 11 June | From 9.30am
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Edenvale

[BOOK HERE](#)

The Rev. Dr. Lindsay Armstrong, PCUSA

INSPIRE

Going for Growth

Going for Growth is now a Denominational Project – we urge all Presbyterians to get on board and embrace this vision. We believe exciting things will happen if we think, pray and act on this. Going for Growth is not a strategy – it is a mindset and a movement. It is about getting our focus back to the Mission of the church. Our committee will continue to add logs and petrol to the fire, but we urge congregations, presbyteries, committees and fellowships to come and join us. We have been excited to see how presbyteries have adopted the theme and are aware of congregations who have also adopted the theme, often adding their own emphasis or "sauce" to the basic theme.



"Toolbox Project"

The committee has appointed a "ToolBox Project" Task Team consisting of Stewart Gordon, George Marchinkowski and Theo Groeneveld.

This year the Toolbox Projects are:

1. The Lindsay Armstrong visit
2. The Interim Moderator's Handbook
3. The Discipleship Bible Study.

Month of Mission

The Committee has agreed to run a Month of Mission again. This will be our ninth one! As usual it will consist of a preaching plan and devotions rolled out on Mon-Fri by email and on Facebook. The theme will be Discipleship (Overview, Bible Maturity, Prayer, Fellowship, Prompted by the Spirit, Service and Witness.) As already mentioned, the Month of Mission will be combined with a prayer initiative for Going for Growth.

Congregational Survey

In January we asked the entire Denomination to fill in a congregational survey. This coincided with the annual requirement to fill out the Appendix D3 forms which hopefully meant that many session clerks and ministers had the relevant info at their fingertips. The survey consisted of only 10 questions and should not have taken long to complete and could be done online from a computer or cell-phone. The results are being tabulated and will be distributed with the Supplementary Papers.

Inspire Conference

Our online Inspire Conferences have been successful and the benefit of running them online is that the material is still available. You can see our 2020 and 2022 Inspire conferences at:

- <https://www.upcsa-mad.org.za/news/hq/>
- <https://www.upcsa-mad.org.za/news/inspire-online-2022/>

The exciting news is that we are planning our next Inspire Conference!

The Theme will be: **“Be the GROWTH you want to see.”**

Dates are: 15-16 May 2024 (Pentecost Week – Week of Prayer of Unity - CUC)

MOBILISE

The Order of Lay Ministries (OLM)

We are excited that there are over 100 candidates who are “in the process” or have completed their journey in the OLM. We have mainly Lay Preachers, but have also set aside some Evangelists and a Youth Worker. In addition we are opening streams for Pastoral Carers/Visitors and also Counsellors.

1. Candidates

1. There are 69 current candidates, spread across the Presbyteries is as shown in the table.
2. The current candidates include 3 Children’s Ministry Coordinators, 3 Local Evangelists, 2 Pastoral Coordinators and 1 Youth Pastor. The remaining candidates are Lay Preachers.
3. Eleven (11) candidates are busy with the last module and should have completed the course soon.
4. So far 61 candidates have successfully completed the Foundations Course.

2. Foundations Course:

1. Foundations Course assignments are being reviewed by the following people:

Module One	Rev Ian Bernardi and Elder Louise Ruch
Module Two	Elder Sue Hay
Module Three	Rev Wayne v Heerden

PRESBYTERY	
Amathole	2
C Cape	11
eGoli	22
eThekweni	4
Highveld	7
Limpopo	1
Tshwane	3
Trans Xhariep	5
uThukela	1
W.Cape	13

Module Four

Elder Bernard Ayuk

An additional/ alternative reviewer is being

considered

Module Five

Rev Hein Barnard

2. The OLM Coordinator continues to oversee and facilitate the process.

3. General

1. The Executive Commission is reminded that formal Terms of Reference exist for Children's Ministry Coordinators, Local Evangelists, Pastoral Coordinators, Worship/Choir leaders and Youth Pastors.

2. Formal Terms of Reference have now been drawn up for Lay Preachers to facilitate the understanding of the LP's role. Prior to this, the LP role was defined in terms of the regulations contained in the Manual of Faith & Order.

3. Terms of Reference for Christian Counsellors and Pastoral Visitors have also been drawn up. These two functions, together with the existing Pastoral Coordinator, make an effective pastoral team, providing hands-on care within congregations. It is proposed to expand the ministry streams currently covered by the OLM to include Christian Counselling and Pastoral Visitation.

4. A training course for Children's Ministry Coordinators has been developed and "tested" in Egoli Presbytery. The training content is aimed at ensuring that a CMC will have the capacity to carry out the functions defined in the CMC Terms of Reference. This material is now available to all Presbyteries from the OLM Coordinator.

5. Egoli will be running a pilot preaching workshop later this year. Once completed this training material, too, will then be made available to the Denomination.

6. In the 9 years that the OLM has been running, it has been necessary – from time to time – to adapt certain procedures to facilitate access to the program. It is envisaged that, later this year, the OLM Oversight Committee will work through and update the existing Guidelines, application forms, etc to bring the documentation in line with current practices.

There still seems to be a perception that the OLM is a door to ordained ministry. This is NOT the case. The idea has always been to support the clergy and not to provide an alternative. A video explaining the OLM and the process to be followed is available on our website.

Shared Ministry

The realities of finances and dwindling congregations have made the idea of shared ministry more important than ever before. The committee has compiled a guide for shared ministry which we have passed on to the Manual Committee for consideration, but we urge the Executive Commission to adopt the guideline and refer it to Presbyteries as a practical tool for implementing shared ministry. The guideline is an Addendum to this report.

RESOURCE

Website

Our website is a sadly under-used resource for Bible Study Materials, articles, conference presentations and the like. It has been recently been revamped and we urge you to visit www.upcsa-mad.org.za

REACH.

A Quiver of Courses and Materials

Currently we have some materials that we recommend:

- For Evangelism Training:

- The L10T course (Luke 10 Transformation) which is a hands-on guide for sharing our faith with others. It is free and the author has given us free use of the course. We have two committee members who can assist you with implementing this.
- The Faithful Witness Course – administered by Malan Nel.
- We are also in discussions with the Alpha Course Southern Africa Branch about their materials.
- For training in Missional outreach.
 - The Mission Shaped Ministry course by Fresh Africa is an in-depth course which is run from time to time. Obtainable from Fresh Africa <https://www.freshafrica.org.za/>
 - The Mission Shaped Introduction is a primer for Sessions and Congregations and is highly recommended. Obtainable from Fresh Africa <https://www.freshafrica.org.za/>

Thanks

Special thanks need to go to the members of the Committee who have been creative, supportive, enthusiastic and participative. What a privilege to be part of a team like this. Special kudos go to Mrs Eddie Stopforth who coordinates our OLM and goes the extra mile for them. We also appreciate our General Secretary Lungile Mpetsheni and his assistant Mrs Christine Kasambara who both always enthusiastically support and assist us.

Conclusion

As Mission and Discipleship we are grateful to be able play our part in serving the Church. Our prayer is that, with God's help, the UPCSA will grow: That we will **sow** new congregations, **grow** existing congregations and **reap** a harvest of people who will come to a deeper relationship with Christ.

Proposals

1. Executive Commission receives the report.
2. Executive Commission sets aside October as the Month of Mission, encourages its ministers to make use of the preaching plan that will be circulated in August and recommends the daily devotions to all members.
3. Executive Commission urges Presbyteries to use the Shared Ministry Guidelines when considering Shared Ministry.
4. Executive Commission urges Presbyteries not to change Mission and Discipleship Conveners unless there has been an understudy who is conversant with the OLM procedures and the Going For Growth Project so that we don't lose continuity in these areas.

Addendum

Practical Steps towards Shared Ministry

INTRODUCTION “SHARED MINISTRY”

1. With adverse economic situations and the financial pressures placed on our congregations, “Shared Ministry” is one of the options available to address the issue of vacant congregations who are unable to afford a minister.
2. In a nutshell, Shared Ministry is where two or more congregations combine their resources to appoint a minister to serve them. In effect, the minister is being appointed part-time to each congregation but the Shared Ministry Memorandum will serve to bring alignment of purpose and priorities, more than two separate appointments would.
3. This has to be done carefully and thoughtfully to prevent burnout of the minister or one congregation taking advantage of the arrangement to the detriment of the other.
4. The concept of “Shared Ministry” was approved by the 2018 UPCSA General Assembly.

DEFINING THE TERMS USED:

1. **Exploratory Conversation:** This is a confidential, “no strings attached” conversation that happens between representatives of two sessions to determine whether there is openness to explore a Shared Ministry arrangement. It is initiated by a session who identify a congregation to enter into discussion with. There should be at least three, preferably four representatives from each congregation. Of them, two should be elders, one should be fully conversant with the congregation’s stewardship matters and one should be in communication with the fellowships and small groups of the congregation. If either congregation has a minister, the minister should be in attendance, but recuse themselves when matters of appointment and stipend are discussed.
2. **Negotiations:** Once both congregations have given permission to explore a Shared Ministry arrangement, formal negotiations should commence and a Shared Ministry Council should be formed as per the definition below. This process should be facilitated by the Interim Moderator(s) of the congregation(s). If one of the congregations has a minister, Presbytery should appoint an assessor in their place to avoid a conflict of interest. The key task of this Council is to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding which provides detailed guidelines for the shared Ministry. Once the Memorandum has been drafted, it is presented to each Congregation by their Assessor or Interim Moderator. If both congregations are happy, it is presented to the Presbytery who will appoint the minister to the congregations.
3. **Memorandum / Memorandum of Understanding:** This is the heart of Shared Ministry arrangement. It spells out the key details of the joint work:
 1. The Person they would like appointed.
 2. The Emoluments that will be paid and the amounts payable by each congregation. This includes manses and church cars or housing and travel allowances.
 3. The arrangements that will be made to ensure compliance with regard to tax, UIF, Pension, etc.
 4. The hours and duties required of the minister in each congregation.
 5. Arrangements for the conducting of services, and hours spent in meetings and pastoral care.

6. Processes to resolve conflicts, clashes and disappointments.
7. Arrangements for the Shared Ministry Council to regularly review progress, emoluments and the well-being of the minister.

It should be noted that the better this document is drawn up, the less trouble could arise.

4. **Shared Ministry Council.** Made up of four representatives from each congregation. At least one should be fully conversant with the congregation's stewardship matters, at least one should be in communication with the fellowships and small groups of the congregation and at least two should be elders. (A person can wear more than one "hat".) This council meets at least annually when there is a minister in order to review the appointment, package and terms of the Memorandum. When the Shared Ministry is vacant, then the Council meets with the Interim Moderator more regularly to work towards filling the vacancy.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SHARED MINISTRY

1. This is a partnership between two or even three congregations who are not in a financial position to suitably maintain a full time Minister as individual congregations.
2. It is vitally important to note that this is NOT an assimilation of one congregation by another. Partner congregations maintain their individual properties, services, sessions, committees, fellowships and identities.
3. Congregations can partner on a variety of principles, for example:
 - Geographically close congregations
 - Congregations with similar style of service and vision and mission
 - An under-resourced congregation partnered with a well resourced one.
4. Partnering of congregations should not be enforced by the Presbytery or Assembly, but be mutually agreed upon by all congregations.
5. In order for Shared Ministry to work, the negotiations prior to commencing the shared ministry should be done thoroughly and with great care, paying attention to financial details, expectations and job descriptions.
6. Once a shared ministry has been put in place, the Presbytery should also send a visitation to the shared ministry annually in the first two years and then biennially for the next four. Thereafter the normal Presbytery visitation programme will apply.
7. The property and funds belonging to, or held on behalf of each congregation shall remain the property and funds of each congregation.
8. All places of worship currently used and occupied by the congregations shall continue to be the places of worship of the individual congregations participating in the shared ministry. Worship services shall be conducted in all congregations as was the case before the establishment of the Shared Ministry charge. Joint services between the congregations participating in the Shared Ministry charge *may* (optionally, not compulsory) be held, where and when it is possible to do so from time to time, as agreed upon by the participating congregations. There is no need to include such joint services in the memorandum of understanding, as situations are ever evolving during the period of "Shared Ministry".
9. The Sessions and Stewardship Structures of each congregation shall remain the same and continue their business as usual with the Shared Minister being the Moderator of each Session.
10. Decisions affecting all the congregations in the Shared Ministry will be made by the Shared Ministry Council.
11. Congregations must accept that they cannot expect full-time ministry from a shared minister. Not only is the minister constrained by the hours and duties

specified in the Memorandum, but there is a significant cost around the multi-tasking required to serve in two contexts. Congregations and Office Bearers should be cognisant of strain this places on their minister.

12. There needs to be a lot of grace in this relationship because trouble is no respecter of arrangements and one can be faced with the predicament of a both congregations experiencing a death or trauma at the same time and the shared minister can't be in two places at once.

STEPS TOWARDS A SHARED MINISTRY APPOINTMENT.

1. The Session of a Congregation agrees to explore a Shared Ministry. They may be:
 - A congregation struggling to pay their current minister and wanting to share them.
 - A vacant congregation wanting to share a minister serving in another congregation
 - A vacant congregation wanting to partner with another vacant congregation to get a minister
 - A well-resourced congregation wanting to help another congregation by sharing a minister
 - An under-resourced congregation wanting help by sharing a minister with resourced congregation.
2. The Session identifies a possible partner congregation, appoints a team and writes to that session requesting an "Exploratory Conversation" as per the definition given above.
3. If the outcome of the "Exploratory Conversation" is positive, then each congregation calls a congregational meeting requesting permission to enter into a Shared Ministry Negotiation.
4. If both congregations agree, a "Shared Ministry Council" is formed as per the definition given above and the "Negotiations" begin.
5. The "Negotiations" should be done with great care. Attention to relevant and important detail will prevent heartache down the road – goal of the process is to draw up a detailed "Memorandum of Shared Ministry." The Memorandum should spell out the duties and responsibilities of each congregation (financial and otherwise) very clearly as well as the duties of the minister to each congregations.
6. Once the "Memorandum of Shared Ministry" is finalised, it is presented for approval to each congregation in meetings presided over by the Interim Moderator or Assessor. Congregants should sign their copy of the Memorandum.
7. The Memorandums are combined and sent to the Presbytery Ministry Committee who review it and bring it to Presbytery.
8. If Presbytery approves the Memorandum, it arranges for the minister to be appointed to the congregations as their shared minister. (Presbytery should discern whether a joint appointment service or separate appointments are most appropriate. If separate appointments services are held, representatives from the other congregation(s) should be present.)
9. Presbytery appoints a visitation committee and instructs them to conduct a visitation towards the end of the first year of the Shared Ministry. The visitation should consider whether the life, work and witness of each of the Congregations has benefited from the Shared Ministry and whether there is a healthy and cordial relationship between the Minister and the participating congregations.
10. Presbytery ensures that that Shared Ministry is visited annually in the first three years and then biennially. (Once every two years)
11. The following Document should also be signed at the appointment service.

SHARED MINISTRY AGREEMENT

"By decision of the Presbytery of the following congregations..... and are partnered as from the20..... and the Revd..... is appointed to the Shared Ministry charge as per this memorandum of agreement and under the following terms and conditions":

Session Clerk (Congregation A)	B)	Session Clerk (Congregation
Signature _____		Signature _____
Date _____		Date _____

PROVISION OF MINISTRY TASK TEAM REPORT

This Task Team was formed by a resolution of the Executive Commission in 2022.

The proposal was as follows:

The Executive Commission

a. appreciates the brief analyses of the state of the church in the city/suburban and in the rural areas; and

b. requests the Priorities and Resources Committee, working with the Ministry Committee and Mission & Discipleship Committee to study the situation and report at the next General Assembly.

MEETING#1

In response to this the General Secretary called a meeting of the conveners of Ministry, P&R and M&D. At the time these were Chris Mkandawire, Kefiloe Masiteng and Theo Groeneveld. This took place on 22 Nov 2022.

In describing the challenge, the GS further indicated the crisis of congregations who are unable to find ministers.

- Suburban Congregations: Emigration of ministers
- Rural Congregations: Ageing Congregations (Congregants depend on grants so finances dwindle)

DISCUSSION

During discussion the following points were noted.

- The M&D (now UPCS) Going For Growth Project would pick up many of these concerns too so we should be careful not to duplicate efforts.
- The M&D was conducting a Survey of Congregations
This process could be escalated and accelerated.
- A study could be done on cross-cultural placements of ministers
 - Case Studies: St Andrews Umtata, Lyttelton.
 - Also transnational – challenges: Work-permits etc...
- We should consider the CWM Partnership in Mission
 - 32 Mission partners
 - Benefit of outside funding: We offer a manse, they bring missional people.
- We could call a Consultation further down the road (P&R to budget)
- We need to form an ongoing Task Team:
2 Per Committee (Convener + 1) (Rotate Convenership)
- It was finally agreed that this is:
 - A slow process
 - To start a conversation
 - which will draw in from Going for Growth
 - and make use of Case-Studies

Some Delays

Due to the resignation and replacement of the ministry secretary and various other factors, there was not much work in 2023.

MEETING#2

A brief meeting was held in Feb 2024 and it was agreed that this work needed to be accelerated again. It was noted that:

1. We need to ensure that there are some elders on the task team
And also some representatives from rural contexts.
2. The congregations survey by MAD had gone out and results would be available soon.

3. MAD had also done significant work on a Shared Ministry guide and it was hoped that this would help significantly.
4. It was also noted that there was an overture by the Rev Mathemba Tati³ that should be considered.
5. This committee should work hard to explore these matters to bring a solid report to the 2025 assembly.
6. At this point the task team consists of Theo Groeneveld(Current Convener), Zwai Mtyhobile and Kefiloe Masiteng with the intention to co-opt as is mentioned above.

Proposals

1. Executive receives the report.

3 Who has sadly passed away.

MINISTRY COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINISTRY COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION 2024 TO BE HELD IN HYBRID WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE TSHWANE PRESBYTERY IN JUNE

INTRODUCTION

"At the heart of every society and every individual in that society is a belief system that shapes its ideas, culture, day-to-day activities and future goals. This is derived from tradition, history, and knowledge of past experience. It is the ethos that motivates the person to participate in the community of life." -Dr Julius Garvey

The Ministry Committee of the General Assembly, amidst all the financial challenges the denomination is facing and experiencing, is committed to carry its mandate which is to serve the denomination in training all its ordained ministers, students and candidates for Ministry to be future leaders who will exercise their thinking abilities, question everything that comes their way and in turn create a new knowledge through their theologizing.

The UPCSAs, at times like these, needs Ministers who have an ability to be critical in their thinking and, not only be passive in their critic but also to be creative as they find new ways of doing theology, serving communities, making congregations centers of life, and empowering communities in which they exist, and meeting the challenges of this time in their ministries.

It is our vision as Ministry Committee to "together go back to the basics". Thabo Mbeki in his 1998 speech, wrote:

"Unless we are able to answer the question "Who were we?" we will not be able to answer the question "What shall we be?"

Travelling together back to what we were and being where we are meant to be, will assist the denomination in realizing its dream of what it intends to be, taking into consideration what Jesus wanted His church to be, "to be one" as the UPCSAs strives to be a reconciled community of christians exercising a prophetic witness to Christ.

It is therefore encouraging to report to the Executive Commission, that, some of the efforts and work taken to achieve our vision are as follows:

1. Virtual Ministry meetings were held from July 2023 to April 2024 and the last one, after the submission of this report, will be in May 2024.
2. The Ministry Committee had managed to have a discernment conference virtually in October 2023. The 2024 discernment Conference will be held from the 31st May – 3rd June 2024.
3. Ministry Committee had a physical Post Academic Training Conference held within the bounds of Central Cape Presbytery in September 2023, and we are so thankful to God for His provisions.
4. The 2024 March Post Academic Training Conference was held within the bounds of the Tshwane Presbytery.
5. For the edification and an empowerment of ordained Ministers, Probationers and all the members of the UPCSAs, some of the presentations during the 2023 Post Academic Training Conference were open to all who were interested.
6. Financial contributions (Grants) were made to the ongoing training of Ministers from the Robert Niven fund.
7. A meeting with seconded Ministers was held and were reminded of their obligation towards the UPCSAs.
8. Bible studies on retirement are completed. They will be loaded to the denominational website for easy access.
9. We have 24 students in all the recognized institutions of higher learning.
10. A workshop for the Ministry Committee was held in January 2024.

11. The Ministry Committee has embarked on running roadshows to all the 19 UPCSA Presbyteries.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The terms of reference for the Ministry Committee are as follows:

- (vi) To discern candidates for the ministry, using Discernment criteria and procedures laid down from time to time by the General Assembly.
- (vii) To oversee the academic and practical entrepreneurship training and spiritual formation of candidates to the point of ordination.
- (viii) To Facilitate ongoing theological training, skills development and spiritual formation for ordained ministers.
- (ix) To communicate and co-operate with other Churches/(Denominations) concerning the training of ministers.
- (x) To receive applications from ordained ministers (from other denominations) to be admitted to the ministry of the UPCSA and to bring proposals to General Assembly concerning those who meet the requirements for entry into the ministry, as laid down from time to time by the Assembly.
- (xi) To work with the Pastoral Committees of Presbyteries to deal with marital breakdown and divorce in the ministry and to develop pastoral resources for strengthening marriages and dealing with divorce.
- (xii) To work with Presbyteries to promote and administer the training and work of the Order of Lay Preachers.
- (xiii) To develop resources for and promote the work of any other forms of ministry not catered for in the Terms of Reference of any other Assembly Committee.
- (xiv) To provide guidance on minimum Stipends, travel allowances and pulpit fee for Minister's
- (xv) To advertise vacant positions from the institutions of higher learning and to be part of the interviews through the Ministry secretary at these institutions, and to process the secondment of the successful candidate.
- (xvi) To discern candidates for the ministry, using discernment criteria and procedures laid down from time to time by the General Assembly.
- (xvii) To oversee the academic and practical entrepreneurship training and spiritual formation of candidates to the point of ordination.
- (xviii) To facilitate ongoing theological training, skills development and spiritual formation for ordained ministers.
- (xix) To communicate and co-operate with other Churches/ (Denominations) concerning the training of ministers.
- (xx) To work with the Pastoral Committees of Presbyteries to deal with marital breakdown and divorce in the ministry and to develop pastoral resources for strengthening marriages and dealing with divorce.
- (xxi) To work with Presbyteries to promote and administer the training and work of the Order of Lay Preachers.
- (xxii) To develop resources for and promote the work of any other forms of ministry not catered for in the Terms of Reference of any other Assembly Committee.
- (xxiii) To provide guidance on minimum Stipends, travel allowances and pulpit fee for Ministers.
- (xxiv) To advertise vacant positions from the institutions of higher learning and to be part of the interviews through the Ministry secretary at these institutions, and to process the secondment of the successful candidate.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Assembly Ministry Committee is composed of the following members: Rev. Christopher Mkandawire Convener (Convener), Rev. Mzwamadoda Mtyhobile (Ministry Secretary), Mr. Nathi Ndlovu, Mrs Nomawethu Mayekiso, Rev. Mabandla Nkayi, Dr. Inette Taylor, Rev. Yolisa Mlalandle, Rev. Fezeka Jobela, Rev. Tatenda Garande, Rev Douglas Bower and Rev Patricia Phiri.

STUDENTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

The number of students the UPCSA has in all the recognized theological institutions is 24.

#	NAME & SURNAME	INSTITUTION	YEAR OF STUDY
1.	Chokwe, Kolopo	TEEC	2 Year
2.	Dippa, Bongiwe	TEEC	1 st Year
3.	Goma, Bornface	UCZU	3 rd Year
4.	Kasongo, Willard	UCZU	2 nd Year
5.	Keyi, Sphiwo	TEEC	3 rd Year
6.	Kyabuntu, Grace Shabana	UCZU	2 nd Year
7.	Mkandawire, Daniel	UCZU	2 nd Year
8.	Muwowo, Mathew	UCZU	2 nd Year
9.	Scott, Glen	TEEC	1 st Year
10.	Chikomo, Christian	RCU	3 rd Year
11.	Hlathi, Sicelo	UP	3 rd Year
12.	Maselesele, Lusani	TEEC	1 st Year
13.	Maxamba, Masixole	TEEC	1 st Year
14.	Mbedzi, Nduvho	TEEC	1 st Year
15.	Mguni, Njabulo	RCU	3 rd Year
16.	Mpolweni, Nomvuzo	TEEC	1 st Year
17.	Mtolo, Thabiso	UKZN	3 rd Year
18.	Ngcambu, Mteteleli	TEEC	3 rd Year
19.	Nachengwa, Olivia	RCU	1 st Year
20.	Chikanya, Anton	RCU	4 th Year
21.	Ganje, Joshua	RCU	2 nd Year
22.	Mncwabe, Nkosinathi	TEEC	3 rd Year
23.	Vaaiboom, Chwayita	UP	Honours
24.	Mfunda, Lerato	UOVS	3 rd Year

DISCERNMENT CONFERENCE

We had a hybrid discernment Conference in September of 2023. Seventeen candidates were invited to participate. Only two of the seventeen were accepted and two of them deferred.

The 2024 Discernment Conference will be held physically in Gauteng in May/June 2024. We would like to bring it to the attention of the Executive Commission that, due to the economic difficulties that the denomination is facing, all candidates that will be invited to participate in the conference will be transported by their sending Presbyteries. A communication in this regard had been sent to all the Presbyteries of the UPCSA. The Ministry Committee of the General Assembly will be responsible for boarding and lodging.

PROBATIONERS

The following are the probationers for 2024, not in any specific order.

#	PROBATIONER NAME	PRESBYTERY	CONGREGATION
1.	Ndzakayi, Phuthumani	Western Cape	Retreat
2.	Vokwana, Bamanye	Amathole	Adelaide Township
3.	Gordon, Amber-Leigh	eGoli	Mount Faith
4.	Mupfururi, Tariro	Zimbabwe	Mufakose
5.	Mantashe, Sihle	Tiyo Soga	Ndakana
6.	Muwowo, Fishani	Copperbelt	Bwacha
7.	Zondo, Tuleleni	Central Cape	Jeffrey's Bay
8.	Yoyo, Simphiwe	Central Cape	Plettenberg and Knysna
9.	Njengane, Cecil	Central Cape	Thembaletu, George

In September 2023 the Post Academic Conference was held within the bounds of Central Cape Presbytery. This conference was very successful, and we thank God.

The 2024 March Post Academic Conference was held within the bounds of Tshwane Presbytery, and we thank the two Presbytery for making it possible for the PAT to happen, the support they had shown is much appreciated.

The Ministry Committee of the GA is planning to have the next Post Academic Training within the bounds of the Synod of Zambia in September.

It is most unfortunate that Ministry Committee discovered that there were serious concerns with regard to Bandile Ngubane's studies and had to remove him with immediate effect from the list of prospective probationers and as a Ministry Student for the UPCSA. The issue and the removal were reported and dealt with by both Drakensberg Presbytery and Ministry Committee in line with 17.25 of the MOFAO.

Mpho Matlala a probationer is not yet placed, and we appeal to Presbyteries and congregations to assist.

REQUEST FOR SECONDMENT

Rev. Khanyiswa Minya – SANDF

The Presbytery of eGoli submitted its support and request for the secondment of the Rev Khanyiswa Minya as a Chaplain in SANDF. The Ministry Committee supports the application and recommends it to the Executive Commission.

Rev. Nobuhle Mbatha – SAPS

The Presbytery of eGoli submitted its support and request for the secondment of the Rev Khanyiswa Minya as a Chaplain in SANDF. The Ministry Committee supports the application and recommends it to the Executive Commission.

MINISTRY CONCERNS

The Ministry Committee learned with sadness that Mr Eric Masikane did not complete his studies. This led the Ministry Committee to send this matter to the office of the Moderator of the General Assembly for further action. This matter is now handled by both the Moderator of the General Assembly and the uThukela Presbytery.

GRANTING OF THE SEAT

The Central Cape Presbytery has applied for the seat for the following Ministers: There are two Ministers (Rev N Khalipa & L Saule) without charge within the Presbytery who have applied for credentials three years ago. The Presbytery was instructed by the 2022 executive commission of the General Assembly to grant them credentials, after they had been fully re-admitted to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the UPCSA. As their credentials had lapsed, the procedure to grant them a seat becomes a prerogative of the General Assembly or Executive Commission of the General Assembly. The matter has been discussed at length, after deliberations the Presbytery resolved that the Clerk of the Presbytery urges the Clerk of the General Assembly to place the item on the agenda of the 2024 Executive Commission so that Rev. N Khalipa and Rev L Saule could be given a seat within in the Presbytery.

The Decision of the 2022 Executive Commission, Decision 21 under the Ministry Committee reads:

"The Executive Commission approves the readmission of the Rev Khalipha and the Rev Loyd Saule for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament and Instructs the Presbytery of Central Cape to Grant them credentials."

The Presbytery of Central Cape did as instructed by the Executive Commission. This was challenged by some commissioners from the Central Cape Presbytery and was sent to the AARP.

The ruling by the AARP has confused the Presbytery. When the Presbytery of Central Cape granted these two Ministers seats, they were found to have done the wrong thing together with the Ministry Committee Secretary who had advised them to grant the seat.

It is in this light that the Ministry Committee is engaging the Manual Committee and the AARP to clarify once and for all whose responsibility it is to grant seats to Ministers. Is it a Presbytery or General Assembly? The outcome of the engagement will be reported in supplementary papers.

NON-PERFORMING STUDENTS

In the 2023 General Assembly held in Zimbabwe, the Ministry Committee reported on non-performing students. The Assembly having discussed the matter instructed the Ministry Committee to apply a clause in Chapter 17 of the Manual of Faith and Order relevant in dealing with the non-performance of students.

The Ministry Committee immediately after the General Assembly embarked on a mission of finding and having a conversation with those students whom they were able to reach.

The Ministry Committee managed to reach the following students:

Central Cape:

Mr Eric Mata and Mr Monde Mzongwana were reached through the Ministry Convener of Central Cape Presbytery.

Trans Xhariep:

Mr Letsatsi Mokheseng through Ministry Convener.

The Ministry Committee through its Administrative Assistant and its Ministry Secretary has not managed to get any kind of response from the other students mentioned in the table below, but due to their non-performance they will be removed from the list of Ministry Students of the UPCS, and they will have to reapply through their Presbyteries when they are done with their studies. Below are the removed names:

#	Name & Surname	Presbytery	Year of Study	Year recognized as a Student of the Ministry
1.	Lydia, Lebesa	eGoli	1 st year	2019
2.	Eric, Mata	Central Cape	3 rd year	2018
3.	Letsatsi, Mokheseng	Trans-Xhariep	3 rd year	2016
4.	Monde, Mzongwana	Central Cape	1 st year	2019
5.	Nkululeko, Mntungwa	eGoli	3 rd year	2019

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

The Ministry Committee of the General Assembly in its workshop held in January 2024 resolved the following:

1. At the time of application, the student must be 45 years of age or less. No one over 45 years of age will be admitted to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the UPCS. The UPCS should at all costs refuse to be an Old Age home or a place of retirement. The UPCS should refuse to be a place of refuge for all those who are running away from their denominations or are not in good standing with their denominations and or are rejected by the denominations of their first choice.
2. Presbyteries to take full responsibility for the submission of names for discernment to the Ministry Committee. An extract clearly stating the names that were agreed upon by the Presbytery to be sent with the application forms. It has become clear that most presbyteries could not account for the candidates that were sent for discernment.

3. All those who will be admitted in 2024 going forward will have to pay for their studies. Ministry Committee will no longer be responsible for the tuition fees and or allowances for the students. Only those who are already in the system, tuition will be paid for them. This is already happening, where most students are using their own funds to study. The reality is that, in all different countries that are enough opportunities for people to apply for, for them to have a formal education. We may look at other fields of study, this is happening.
4. Ministry Committee will recommend courses for those who wish to be Ministers of word and sacrament of the UPCSА. All those who wish to have their qualifications recognised will have to adhere to the recommendations set forth by the Ministry Committee. We would also like to remind everyone and all the Presbyteries, that entry to Ministry qualification is a minimum diploma in Theology and nothing else.
5. Those who will be recognised as students will have to be housed at Sedibeng (RSA) and will have to enrol at University of Pretoria. The Executive Commission needs to know that we have a lecturer seconded and paid by the UPCSА in UP. We have a house of studies at Pretoria. Taking Students to other Universities around South Africa without taking into consideration what we already have and invested in, is basically a futile exercise and we will be working against what we have invested in. We have an obligation to the University of Pretoria and to the House of Studies.

ORDAINED MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

The procedure for the admission will be followed as stated by the MOFAO. The age restriction will apply. All those above the age of 45 will not be admitted to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the UPCSА.

The Ministry Committed having recognised the Rev Mvuyisi Badi's call, who comes from the Baptist church and has been an active member of the UPCSА for more than 5 years and, residing within the Western Cape Presbytery, would like to apply for his provisional admission to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the UPCSА.

BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTRY

The Bi-Vocational Ministry was introduced as a pilot project for five years. The Ministry Committee at its workshop held in January 2024 deliberated on this matter and resolved that:

1. The UPCSА has and recognises one ordination for all its Ministers of Word and Sacrament.
2. No candidate will be applying as a Bi-Vocational candidate. Bi-Vocation may only happen during a call, appointment, and or stated supply, by agreement between the congregation, Presbytery and Student.

PROPOSALS

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes that UPCSА has 24 students in different institutions of higher learning.
3. The Executive Commission notes that the 2024 Discernment Conference will be held physically in Gauteng from the 29th May to the 2nd June 2024.
4. The Executive Commission notes that all candidates that will be invited to participate in the Discernment Conference will be transported by their sending Presbyteries.
5. The Executive Commission notes that nine Probationers out of ten have been placed, with the exception of Mr Mpho Matlala.
6. The Executive Commission notes that the next Post Academic Training will be held within the bounds of the Synod of Zambia in September 2024.

7. The Executive Commission notes that Bandile Ngubane is removed from the list of probationers and as a Ministry student for the UPCSA.
8. The Executive Commission seconds the Rev Khanyiswa Minya as a Chaplain in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).
9. The Executive Commission seconds the Rev Nobuhle Mbatha as a Chaplain in the South African Police Services (SAPS).
10. The Executive Commission notes that the case against Eric Masikane is under the capable hands of the Moderator of the General Assembly and the uThukela Presbytery. A full report will be given to the 2025 General Assembly.
11. The Executive Commission notes the removal of the following non-performing students from the list of students of the UPCSA, viz. Lydia Lebesa, Eric Mata, Letsatsi Mokheseng, Monde Mzongwana and Nkululeko Mntungwa.
12. The Executive Commission notes
 - a) that the cutoff age for new applicants from 2024 onwards, to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the UPCSA is now set at 45 years of age.
 - b) that the decision of the cut off age applies to Ministers applying from other denominations too.
13. a) The Executive Commission notes that candidates who attend the Discernment Conference and are recognised as Ministry students of the Word and Sacrament of the UPCSA from 2024 will have to fund their own studies.
14. The Executive Commission notes that the Ministry Committee of GA recommends:
 - a) courses to be studied,
 - b) that the Sedibeng House of studies and the University of Pretoria will be a priority institution for all the recognised students in RSA.
15. The Executive Commission approves the provisional acceptance of the Rev Mvuyisi Badi to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the UPCSA
16. Executive Commission notes that all applicants to be recognised for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament will apply from 2024 as full-time applicants.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Report to Executive Commission 2024

Convener; The Revd. Philani Mbanjwa

PEF Administrator: Mr Ronnie Maqubela, Mr Shepherd Masaraure Zim, Ms Rhodah Mtande, Ms Mmule Mabuse, Mr Dumisani Khoza, Rev Xolisile Mlotshwa, Mr Twasile. Mbandazayo, Ms Nolly Vellem, Ms Yolande Faba (**secretary**), Rev Fiona Benzon.

Corresponding members: Conveners of Presbytery Education & Training

Meetings

In the year 2023, the General Assembly appointed this committee. Four meetings have taken place since this group was formed, all virtually. Due to the load shedding situation in South Africa, this meeting was fraught with difficulties. Due to this, it has been challenging for our committee to have a high turnout for meetings. I have to admit that the committee's work is impacted by the problem of other members missing meetings because of load shedding. We made an effort to cover the job that falls under our purview by doing this. We discussed how to divide up the committee's work in our first meeting by designating individuals to handle various responsibilities and report back to the committee. We also discussed the PEF task team, which is accountable to the committee at all times. All of this was done to reduce the committee's workload.

Overview;

- **Supporting and training of our pre-schools with regard to Early Child Development. (ECD)**
- **The work being done in various schools in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa; these involve both High Schools and Primary Schools.**
- **Elder training (TIE)**
- **Presbyterian Educational Fund. (PEF)**
- **Children's Ministry support (Kid's Alive)**

In 2023, I was appointed as the General Assembly's convener. In the nine months that have passed, the committee and I have reviewed our terms of reference to familiarise ourselves with the current mission.

Education and training committee's terms of references;

1. To encourage Early Childhood Development projects run by UPCSA congregations by providing guidelines, facilitating access to resources & training courses and facilitating networking among them.

2. To encourage the children's ministry by providing and publicizing resources and training for sessions, ministers, and parents to help children come into a personal faith in Christ and a commitment to the work of the church.
3. To exercise oversight over schools run by the UPCSA and facilitate liaison between the schools and the General Assembly.
4. To train and equip trainers to enable the training of elders and those about to be ordained as elders to be effective in their work.
5. To provide/ facilitate such other training as will strengthen the capacity of and encourage leaders of the church in carrying out their various functions.
6. To encourage UPCSA congregations to become involved in the local schools in their communities by providing moral, ethical and spiritual support and teaching.
7. To supervise the Presbyterian Educational Fund by
 - a) having oversight of the PEF administrator,
 - b) considering applications received from UPCSA members for assistance (from the PEF) in funding their or their children's education at high schools, colleges or universities,
 - c) overseeing records of all donations received towards the PEF,
 - d) allocating bursary awards to successful applicants; and
8. To see to the translation of publications, training materials, etc., as required by the General Assembly or its Commissions or Committees

SCHOOLS

Zimbabwe

I was allowed to attend the trust meeting and I have visited schools in Zimbabwe. All of the schools I visited demonstrated development, indicating that the schools in Zimbabwe are doing well and that the Trust's work is greatly valued. The effort of the committee is done in the Zimbabwean Presbytery, despite the difficulties they face in their daily operations.

SCHOOLS ZIMBABWE

This is a list of schools in Zimbabwe;

David Livingstone Memorial Primary School, Gloag Ranch Primary School, Redbank Primary School, Mnundu Primary School, Robert 2Sinyoka Primary School, Lekkerwater Primary School, David Livingstone Memorial Secondary School, Gloag High School, Presbyterian High School, Harold Munro Chitemere Secondary School and Lekkerwater Secondary School.

These schools have remarkable academic results. It is encouraging to see the conditions under which they work and to compare the outcomes. Notwithstanding the nation's socioeconomic problems, our schools there do amazing job. It is safe to say that the work

being done by our schools in Zimbabwe is flourishing and elevating the UPCSA's profile in the various communities.

Zambia

The report looks upon the committee's activities in Zambia. Zambian schools, across several presbyteries, are performing admirably. The three presbyteries in Zambia are the locations where the committee is working.

Schools

PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOLS.

In Zambia, Schools are owned and run by individual congregations. And each congregation manages its own school. There are seven (7) schools in Zambia and they are in two categories. Thus, community schools and private schools.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

These are complete fee paying schools. Learners pay school fees in order to attend these schools. Teachers are paid by the schools. The following are the private schools:

- St. Columba's in Kabwe
- St. Columba's in Lusaka
- Twinkle - Kabwata in Lusaka
- David Livingstone Memorial in Livingstone.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools usually enrol the less privileged in society. Learners in these schools do not usually pay school fees but in certain circumstances they are charged a minimal amount of money to let the schools run. Most teachers in these schools do not receive good salaries because they do not make much money. In some cases, teachers just volunteer to teach for free or just for an allowance. It is very difficult to run these schools because they don't generate enough money.

The following are the community schools:

- Hilcrest under Chelston congregation in Lusaka. The positive part is that the government has come in to help this school which is in the outskirts of Lusaka city by building a one by three classroom block so that it can start a secondary school once it's completed.
- Ng'ombe in Lusaka
- Garden in Lusaka

All the schools go up to grade seven and the pass rate in both private and community schools is very good. Usually one hundred percent (100%) in private schools.

South Africa

Pholela Secondary School

The school has improved significantly since the construction of new buildings and the repair of old ones. I have visited the school and I received the report that enrolment has increased since the school was extended. There are currently 1067 students (of whom 532 are boys and 535 are girls), 35 teachers, and 9 non-teaching personnel. I must state that this is a no-fee school. The church is no longer involved in the administration of the school because teachers are paid by the Department of Education and receive grants to administer the school. We, as a church, make no contribution. The high cost of electricity is the major problem the school is now experiencing. For a very long period, they have been unsuccessfully attempting to resolve this problem. The water situation has suddenly become a major problem. These two problems prevent the school from operating normally. Although water has been improved in last few months.

It must be reported that this school is doing well in the results. The school did well in the 2023 matriculation results; they got 96.2%, which is indeed an improvement compared to last year. This is a succinct report on Pholela High.

GOOLDVILLE MISSION PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Gooldville Mission Primary School has been doing very well for the period under review. It remains one of the most loved schools in the area with a total enrolment of six hundred and ninety-three (693) learners and twenty-one (21) Educators. This number exceeds the capacity of the school, but the learners were nevertheless accommodated.

The school has a functional Board of Management Chaired by a retired former Circuit Manager, with a team of diverse members with varied skills. Unfortunately, one of the challenges faced by the school was the performance of the principal who was very derelict to his duties. The Education and Training Committee of the Limpopo Presbytery hold regular meetings with the Board of Management on an advisory capacity, and in one of those meetings, the Board was advised to prefer disciplinary processes against the principal. With the concurrence of his trade union, the principal agreed to take early retirement and the Board appointed a new Principal who is providing good leadership to the school.

Two critical challenges currently face the school. The first challenge relates to financial sustainability of the school. The fees charged by the school are not competitive given the poverty levels in the area where it operates. This results in the second challenge, which is

the loss of educators as a result of the schools' inability to pay competitive salaries. The staff turn-over also affects the administrative staff, as we also lost the Finance Officer who was recruited by the public school.

After looking at the options available to run the school efficiently and in a sustainable way, it was decided by both the Board of Management and the Presbytery that we apply to place the school under Rule 3, Regulation 14, which allow public education to be offered on private property. The implication is that the Educators will be paid by the Department of Education and books and stationery will also be provided. Depending on the quintile under which the school is classified, school nutrition (feeding schemes) will also be provided. An SGB will be appointed in line with the Department of Education guidelines. However, the school will still retain the ethos and values of the UPCSA, which will also release the funds collected from school fees to develop the school infrastructure. At the time of the report, an application has already been lodged with the Limpopo Department of Education, and a response is awaited.

The last decision made was that the name of the school should insert the name 'Presbyterian' in order to ensure that its identity is maintained. The new name will be Goldville Mission Presbyterian Primary School. The Board of Management is in the process of amending the name.

In overall the Board of Management of the School, its management leadership and educators have an excellent relationship with the church.

TRAINING IN ELDERSHIP

You can download the elder enrichment course on the Mission and Discipleship website. The congregation was given access to the training materials, but anyone in need can get in touch with the committee. We also invite the congregation to email eddiestop@global.co.za with a request for the material, or to download it.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

The "Kids alive Drive" website is still in operation congregations can access through the following link;<http://upcsa-kidsalive.org.za/>.

Presbyterian Educational Fund (PEF)

Since General Assembly in July 2023 the PEF task team has met in October 2023 and again in March 2023. Other meetings have been scheduled for the remainder of the year.

2023 DONATIONS RECEIVED

Donations totalling **R 468 902.93** were received in the 2022/2023 financial year. The summary donation schedule appears at the end of the report.

The detailed schedule is at the end of the report and can otherwise be obtained from the administrator.

70 congregations donated	R 115 766.60
2 Presbyteries	8 660.00
Fellowship of Women	74 100.00
Fellowship of Youth	29 972.39
Subtotal	R 228,498.99

The PEF was further blessed to receive the following

The Robert Niven Trust	R 30 553.94
and Individual donors	50 900.00
Sundries	158 950.00
Subtotal	R 240 403.94

TOTAL DONATIONS RECEIVED **R 468 902.93**

A total of R363 214.34 was donated by AMS Haden Instruments but was paid directly from their account to the Institutions.

Sadly, no donation has been received yet this year but after communicating with them I was told they have put a hold on the BBBEE application, however once the Company decides to apply for it PEF will be considered.

Congregations and fellowships would plan their giving to reach the PEF by March each year to facilitate planning and payment of awards.

2023 AWARDS MADE

Although the PEF was not able to make as many awards as it had hoped to make in the 2022/2023 year, it still disbursed more than it did the previous year (2021/2022). The total amount paid out in awards was 67.4% more than the year before but less in numbers at 44 beneficiaries.

The summary awards schedule appears at the end of the report. The detailed schedule can be obtained from the administrator.

It is clear from the tables and graphs below that without the input from our business, trust and individual donors, the work of the PEF would have been much difficult, and the fund would not have been able to assist nearly as many applicants, or awards would have had to be very much smaller. A big thank you to AMS Haden for assisting with **R363 214.34**.

APPEAL TO THE CHURCH

- The number of congregations supporting the PEF remains at **1 in 4 or less**.
- The PEF repeats its appeal to ALL congregations of the UPCSA to support the work of the fund and to donate on a **regular basis**. It also appeals to the new **Fellowship of Men** to play a much more prominent role in supporting the fund and to make the PEF a priority in its ministry.
- The PEF is the only real outreach project of the UPCSA and as such it must be supported in every way possible. It is a ministry which can only be optimally effective if the whole church contributes in support both financially and practically: ensuring both that the fund has sufficient funds to meet the needs of the recipients and also that forms are submitted on time, *all* requested documentation accompanies the initial submission and subsequent documents follow as soon as available, in line with guidelines.
- The Task Team's aim has been to increase the number of awards. This can only be achieved if the funds are available and applicants have submitted all the required information on time. Many more applicants could be assisted if all required documentation was submitted.

There is no guarantee that our 'outside' donors will be able to continue to contribute on the same scale as received in 2022/2023, therefore it is imperative that congregations that have not been contributing begin to donate to the PEF now. PLEASE SEE DONATION SCHEDULE

2024 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

53 application forms were received for 2024. At the time of writing this report no approvals have been made yet due to some outstanding documents not received. RENEWAL OF ASSISTANCE IS NOT AUTOMATIC, and recipients MUST re-apply annually AND do so TIMEOUSLY.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORMS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Applicants and ministers continue to ignore deadlines. Requests to accept forms are on-going into the new year, delaying the processing of forms that have been received earlier. Furthermore, applicants continue to submit **incomplete application forms** with no results, no income information. Other requested information is also omitted.

It must be emphasised to all applicants not to wait until documentation is requested: submit automatically as soon as it is available (*see the Information Section of the Application Form*). The UPCSA funds are being wasted by applicants and their ministers who do not comply with the requirements of the fund, causing the administrator constantly to request and re-request information that has not been submitted. This is not good stewardship of time, and therefore of church funds. The PEF has been very accommodating over the years, understanding that it is likely the very applicants who have not submitted all requirements who need the assistance most urgently, This is where ministers are required to assist the PEF (and the applicant) by ensuring that the correct documentation is obtained and submitted timeously. Neither applicants nor ministers should wait to be asked for the next document required.

The PEF strives for good governance and accountability. This requires statements of the fees accounts of all recipients, both before and after any payment is made to an institution. Final statements showing the PEF contribution(s) received and correctly credited to the recipient's account are required by the PEF's auditors: obtaining these statements from institution or recipient remains a challenge. Applicants are advised to ensure that these statements are submitted: no further contribution can be made until the statements have been received.

AWARDS for 2023/2024

R82 180.00 has been paid out so far this 2023/2024 financial year.

The task team is aiming to pay out to more recipients this year, funds and compliant applicants permitting.

FINANCES

- The PEF investments have been disinvested from FOORD to
- We have not received any update on the PEF investment transferred to the new investment company as promised by the Finance department
- At the time of writing this report, the Convenor and the delegation from the Task Team are busy arranging a meeting to discuss this long outstanding matter .

- Once the investment issue has been sorted, the PEF Administrator should be allowed access to the investment account as is the case with the bank account. This is so that he is kept abreast with the performance of the investment for reporting purposes.
- Slight hiccups were encountered with payments to Zimbabwe and Zambia in the 2023/2024 financial year because of the grey listing of South Africa making it difficult to make payments across the borders. It is hoped these will be sorted for future payments.
- All donors are also requested again to follow up on any deposit into the PEF account, with an email to the PEF administrator, confirming the deposit and the donor details.

The Task Team wishes to remind the Denomination that the PEF has its own bank account and that deposits should be made into this account, not into the general UPCSA account.

GENERAL

The PEF wishes to request the Executive Commission to remind the Congregations to remember the PEF Sunday in June 2024. It is our wish to encourage each and every Congregation to donate not less than R1000.00 on PEF Sunday towards this worthy cause.

PEF DONATIONS RECEIVED as at 30 JUNE, 2023 - SUMMARY								
	July - Dec 2022		Jan - June 2023		TOTAL July 2022 -	No. of Donating Congregations	Congs in Presbyt	% Donating
	AMOUNT		AMOUNT		AMOUNT			Congs
	IN RANDS		IN RANDS		IN RANDS			
CONGREGATIONS IN PRESBYTERIES								
AMATHOLE	R7 098.60		14700.00			16	46	35%
CENTRAL CAPE	R8 190.00		0.00		8190.00	5	29	17%
DRAKENSBERG	R3 222.20		3600.00		6822.20	5	21	24%
eGOLI	2400.00		2000.00		4400.00	3	40	7.5%
eTHEKWINI	1500.00		2000.00		3500.00	3	29	10.34%
HIGHVELD	4500.00		5940.00		10440.00	4	28	14.28%
LEKOA	2500.00				2500.00	3	20	15%
LIMPOPO	2340.00		270.00		2610.00	2	17	12%
TIYO SOGA MEMORIAL	0.00		9499.10		9499.10	15	21	71.42%
TRANS XARIEP	1000.00				1000.00	1	28	3.5%
TSHWANE	29025.00		3190.00		32215.00	9	29	31%
uTHUKELA	0.00		1000.00		1000.00	1	14	7%
WESTERN CAPE	2500.00		9291.70		11791.00	5	70	7%
SUBTOTAL	64275.80		51490.80		115766.60	70	596	11.7%

PRESBYTERIES							
Drakensberg	3000.00		0.00		3000.00		
Lekoa	5660.00		0.00		5660.00		
SUBTOTAL	8660.00				8660.00	2	19 10.5%
Fellowships							
MEN'S	0.00		0.00		0.00		
WOMEN'S	37050.00		37050.00		74100.00		
YOUTH	29972.39		0.00		29972.39		
SUBTOTAL	67022.39		37050.00		104072.39	2	5 40%
OTHER							
SUNDRIES	157200.00		1750.00		158950.00		
INDIVIDUALS	25200.00		25700.00		50900.00		
TRUSTS	30553.94		0.00		30553.94		
SUBTOTAL	212953.94		27450.00		240403.94		
TOTAL DONATIONS RECEIVED	352912.13		115990.80		468902.93		

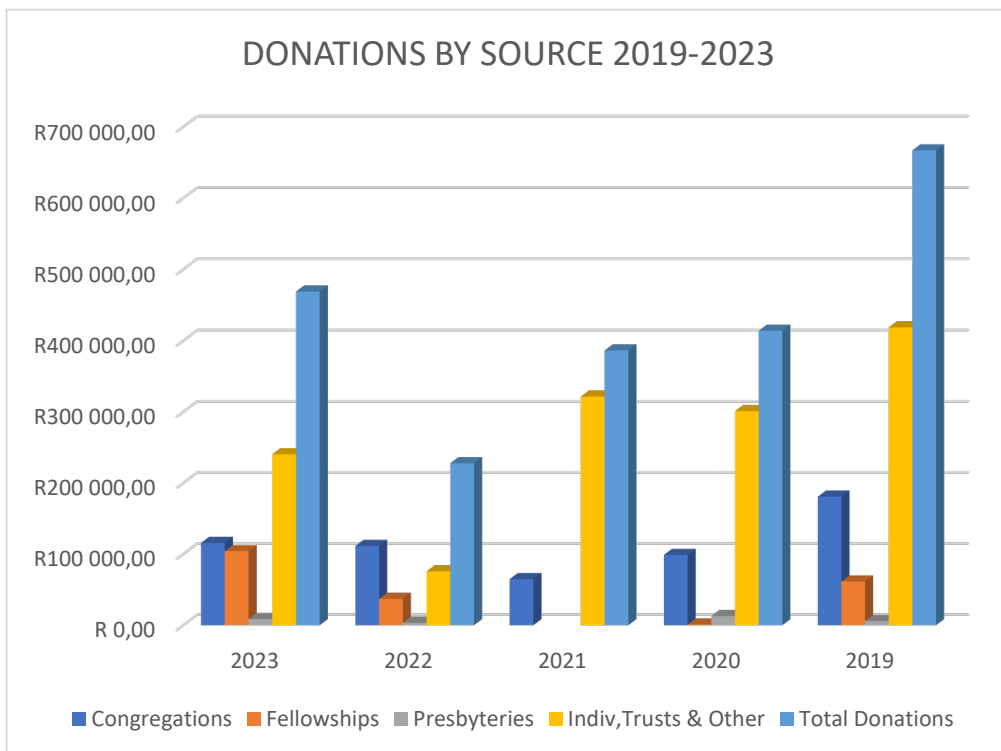
PEF AWARDS MADE FOR THE PERIOD JULY, 2022 to JUNE, 2023 - SUMMARY							
		SCHOOL		UNIV/COLL		TOTAL	
		AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.	AMOUNT	NO.
		IN RANDS		IN RANDS		IN RANDS	
PRESBYTERY							
AMATHOLE	31 074.00	5	208 499.00	6	239 573.00	11	
CENTRAL CAPE	19 053.00	6	12 474.00	2	31 977.00	8	
COPPERBELT							
DRAKENSBERG							
EAST GRIQUALAND	2 730.00	1			2 730.00	1	
eGOLI	47 030.00	7	87 646.34	6	134 676.34	13	
eTHEKWINI	47 795.00	6	72 161.00	2	119 956.00	8	
HIGHVELD	10 000.00	1			10 000.00	1	
LEKOA							
LIMPOPO							
M'CHINGA							
MTHATHA							
MUNALI							
TIYO SOGA MEMORIAL							
TRANS XARIEP			6 523.00	1	6 523.00	1	
TSHWANE	5 677.00	1	70 746.00	3	76 423.00	4	
uTHUKELA							
WESTERN CAPE	20 000.00	2	10 000.00	1	30 000.00	3	
ZIMBABWE							
TOTAL for ALL PRESBYTERIES	181 079.00		470 779.34		651 858.34		

It must be noted that R363 214.34 of the total disbursements was donated by AMS Haden Instruments and Mining, according to the given criteria. This is for their BBBEE rating.

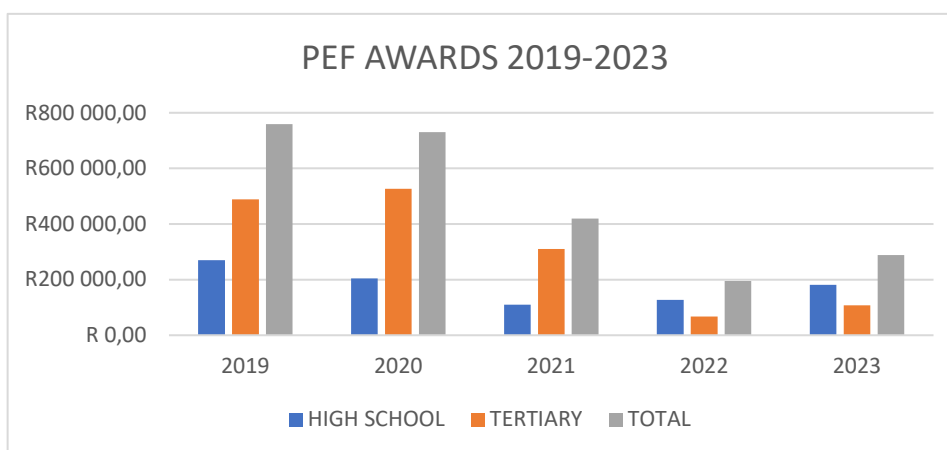
We wish to encourage the Presbyterian youngsters to apply for assistance to further their education and empower themselves with the skills to be better leaders of tomorrow

DONATIONS BY SOURCE 2019-2023

	Congregations	Fellowships	Presbyteries	Indiv,Trusts & Other	Total Donations
2023	R115 766,60	R104 072,39	R8 660,00	R240 403,94	R468 902,93
2022	R111 515,90	R37 050,00	R3 500,00	R75 789,00	R227 854,90
2021	R64 777,00			R321 477,50	R386 254,50
2020	R98 821,40	R1 000,00	R13 000,00	R301 100,52	R413 921,92
2019	R180 775,10	R61 500,00	R6 000,00	R418 696,39	R666 971,49



PEF AWARDS			
	<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>	<u>TERTIARY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>2019</u>	<u>R270 142,17</u>	<u>R488 937,32</u>	<u>R759 079,49</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>R204 656,21</u>	<u>R526 285,80</u>	<u>R730 942,01</u>
<u>2021</u>	<u>R109 750,00</u>	<u>R309 649,26</u>	<u>R419 399,26</u>
<u>2022</u>	<u>R127 500,00</u>	<u>R67 310,00</u>	<u>R194 810,00</u>
<u>2023</u>	<u>R181 079,00</u>	<u>R107 565,34</u>	<u>R288 644,34</u>



Proposals

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission acknowledges and thanks ministers and congregations involved in the schools of UPCSA.
3. The Executive Commission thanks those who have made contributions to PEF and encourages others to do the same.
4. The Executive Commission reminds our congregations and congregants about PEF Sunday in June 2025.
5. The Executive Commission encourages all congregations, fellowships and individuals to make donations to PEF.
6. Executive Commission encourages all ministers and parents of children applying to PEF are encouraged by the executive commission to assist with application forms and to regularly supply all required documentation.

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

Report to ExCom 2024

1. Committee Composition:

The 2024 General Assembly appointed the following to serve in the Committee: Rev Dr David Mushayavanhu (*Convener*), Prof. Dr. Fundiswa Kobo, Rev Dr Malinge Njeza, Revs. Jeremy Smith, Douglas Bax, Lulama Mshumpela, Judith Chirwa, Willingmore Mhlanga, Biggie Mususa, and Khensani, and Messrs. Kevin Bestwick, and Kieren Edge

2. The Terms of Reference of The Doctrine Committee

The Committee operates under the following terms of reference:

- (i) To promote the UPCSA's doctrinal, or theological stance and its faithfulness to its agreed doctrinal standards.
- (ii) To consider any critical or controversial doctrinal, or theological issues that have become controversial in the faith, preaching, and practice of the UPCSA.
- (iii) To develop and make available materials that will help to prepare members of the UPCSA for events, including parents or members-to-be for baptism, the partaking of the Holy Communion, confirmation as members, and the nurturing of faith in general.
- (iv) To formulate positions and policies on such doctrinal, or theological issues for the guidance of the clergy and the laity of the UPCSA and for the Church's witness.
- (v) To deal with all matters referred to it by the General Assembly.

3. Topics of Discussion:

The following matters are still pending before the committee:

- a) The creation of a pamphlet with instructions on how to teach baptism and restrictions regarding unbaptized minors during communion services.
- b) Views on the inspiration, authority, and interpretation of Scripture, (see our Manual of Faith and Order, chapter 2, "Faith of the Church," footnotes to section 6.4.): While affirming that the Scriptures are inspired by God as the sufficient and uniquely authoritative witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God and are the final rule of faith and life, this clause recognizes that UPCSA members have different views on the relation between the Word of God and Scripture:
 - Some fully equate Scripture and the Word of God, regarding it as verbally inspired and infallible.
 - Some distinguish between the Word of God and Scripture as its inspired and normative but fallible human record and witness.
 - Some emphasize that the Word of God is strictly Jesus Christ, the living Word, and see Scripture as the normative and authoritative witness to Christ that by the power of the Spirit becomes and is the Word of God in bearing such witness (Jn.5:39f., II Cor.3:14-4:6).

These three views are distinct viewpoints that can at times lead to significant divergence in their interpretation and application of Scripture. While the goal of the UPCSA's Confession of Faith is to promote unity, it is a matter of current committee's debate as to whether these three divergent views lead in fact to division rather than unity, and whether or in what form all these views should be permitted or acknowledged in our Confession of Faith.

- c) Another crucial query has been how the Bible and revelation(s) from beyond the Bible relate to one another. How does God speak to us today? How ought we to view modern-day "prophecy" and so-called "prophetic voices"?
- d) The development of a common hermeneutic methodology to aid in roundtable discussions and tackle the issues confronting the UPCSA. The goal is to have a study ready for the Assembly's next council meeting.

In the meantime, the Doctrine Committee is working on the matters mentioned above, preparing to give a comprehensive report to the General Assembly in 2025. The report on Confessions will be submitted with the supplementary papers.

4. Conclusion

The Committee has still so much work to do in preparation for the 2025 General Assembly. Regrettably, some members of this Committee have not been active, which impeded the speedy completion of its work. It is hoped that the members will avail themselves as we work towards the General Assembly. We should finish strong.

5. Proposals

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the scope of work that the Committee is dealing with.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY CLUSTER

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PANEL AND COURT OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Report on the Administrative Review Panel and Court of General Assembly Executive Commission 2024

1. Introduction

According to the AARP and Court of Assembly terms of reference this report serves to inform the Executive of the work that has been done and the work that is currently in process.

2. AARP

2.1 13 June 2023 – Application for Review on a decision of the Central Cape Presbytery on the appointment of a Minister by the Rev. Dr. B Hans and three others.

2.1.1 Status: Pending.

2.2 3 July 2023 – Application for Review by some Khobonqaba Congregation Elders against the finding of the Commission appointed by the Presbytery of Amathole.

2.2.1 Status: Withdrawn

2.3 16 December 2023 – Application for Review by Mr Henry Chivanga on the decision of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe on the appointment of a Minister. At the request of the Presbytery the matter was in abeyance pending the internal processes of the Presbytery.

2.3.1 Status: The Presbytery has informed the Clerk that the Presbytery's internal process has disposed of the matter. We are awaiting confirmation from the Applicant that the Application has been withdrawn.

3. Court of General Assembly

Appeal: The Rev Khanyiso Walaza v Court of Presbytery of eGoli

3.1. 1 August 2023 – Court heard and delivered a judgement against the Rev K Walaza wherein Court of Assembly upheld the verdict of the Court of the Presbytery of eGoli which had found him guilty.

3.1.1. Sentence: The Court deposed him from the Ministry of the UPCSA in terms of para. 18.6 (e) of the Manual of Faith and Order and ruled that he cannot be permitted to apply for readmission to the ministry of the UPCSA for a period of 5 years.

3.2. 13 November 2023 – received summons for the High Court of South Africa, Gauteng Division challenging the judgement. The Court has since submitted an Answering Affidavit through the UPCSA lawyers, and we are still waiting for the outcome.

4. Administrative Review Panel Cost Orders

Currently the Administrative Review Panel is not authorized to compel a party or parties that lose a case to pay the costs of the application. With the expense totally borne by the Assembly, there is nothing to disincentivize parties from bringing matters on review. If there was a possibility that a losing party might be compelled to pay at least some of the costs of the application, parties might well think more carefully about the applications that they bring. The meetings of the Review Panel are very expensive and, due to the uncertainties of load shedding, dealing with cases on virtual platforms is not optimal. The

General Assembly instructed the Manual Committee to investigate this and bring a proposal in this regard to the Executive Commission. This matter has been brought to this Executive by the Manual Committee.

Conclusion

We continue to be served by well-qualified ministers and elders on the Court and the Review Panel. We continue to be served by ministers with extensive experience of the UPCSA and lay persons with considerable legal expertise. The Executive should accord its appreciation for these persons and the work they do for the Church.

The Rev Dr Peter D Langerman

Convenor of the Court of Assembly and the Administrative Review Panel of the Assembly

Proposals

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMISSION

1. Introduction

The work of the Communications Committee is guided by the provisions of one of the strategic guidelines of the UPCSA Strategic Plan, which states that **'the UPCSA will promote a positive image and raise its profile'**. This guideline speaks to the fact that the UPCSA should not only be known amongst its members but that over and above we must always strive to ensure that the church always maintains a positive image. Over and above that the Committee ensures that the work of the church is known and understood by all. Hence the pay of line of the Committee that we **inform, educate, and engage.**

For the period under review, the Committee work was driven by the work plan that was crafted and adopted after the last General Assembly.

2. Implementing General Assembly decisions.

The last General Assembly noted the progress made in the improvement of communications within the UPCSA. This was about the various mediums that were employed by the Committee to communicate various issues and publish educational articles, and messages from the Moderator, General Secretary, various Committees, and Presbyteries.

The General Assembly also instructed the Presbyteries which have not done so, to appoint Presbytery Communicators and submit names to the General Secretary's Office no later than September 2023. This decision was a sequel to the previous decision where Presbyteries were requested to appoint Communicators but unfortunately did not do so. The rationale for the appointment of Communicators was to ensure that there would be a seamless supply of news and activities from the Presbyteries and Congregations and to ensure a wider distribution of news. At the time of writing this report only eleven (**11**) Presbyteries had submitted the names. This is a worrying development, given that our Presbyteries just ignored the instruction despite being reminded several times to do so. The Committee had to rely on creative ways to gather articles and reportable activities to ensure that our members were informed. We still urge that those Presbyteries which have not done so be urged to oblige.

The second decision was that Presbyteries and Congregations be encouraged to subscribe to the MyPresby IT Church Management System. Again, implementation of this decision is found wanting. Very few Presbyteries and Congregations have taken steps to subscribe to this important management system. While one of the most difficult challenges our denomination has is effective and efficient management and record keeping, we find it strange that this tool, which is meant to house important and critical information does not seem to enjoy the favor of the church leadership in the Presbyteries and Sessions. The Committee is now looking at creative ways of ensuring that this management system is rolled out. Not only will the system assist us in keeping accurate membership records, but useful information as well. In this digital era, our church must migrate to modern and effective management systems to ensure that our Denomination moves with the times and makes the work of the Session Clerks easier, more efficient, and more effective.

3. Composition and life of the Committee

The Committee is blessed to be composed of dedicated and skilled individuals with different expertise. The strength of the Committee derives from the fact that it is a fair blend of young and old, men and women, and represents the demographics of our Denomination. It also reflects the transnational character of the UPCSA.

In this regard, we are thankful to the Nominations Committee.

While the Committee has in terms of its work plan aimed to meet monthly, it could not sustain this regularity due to the many activities which took place in this period under review. However, thanks to available technology, the Committee was able to do its work seamlessly and delivered on its mandate to inform, educate, and engage. This is thanks to the cooperation of our members who assisted with the required information and educational articles for publication.

We are particularly thankful to the General Secretary whose office has ably played the role of coordinating this work.

4. UPCSA brand reputation

With the advent of social media, especially the Facebook medium, there has been an uncontrolled use of the UPCSA logo and brand by many individuals, who created pages in the name of the UPCSA. The risk of these myriad pages is that innocent readers would not be aware that some of these pages are not official mediums because they use the church logo and symbols. There would therefore be instances where material would be published in these mediums which distorts what the UPCSA stands for. Secondly, some of the logos used are corrupted as they use the wrong colours.

The drive to ensure that the UPCSA promotes a positive image and raises its profile is threatened by the uncontrolled use of church symbols. Various actions were taken to mitigate this, one of them being to locate the administrators of these pages and where possible link them to the official page of the UPCSA, if they are not agreeable to shutting them up.

However, on the positive side, we have seen a gradual migration of people from publishing negative news about the church. What we now see in our communication are proud UPCSA members in Fellowship with one another in their different attires. The theme of the current Moderator of **"Stronger Together"** is finding expression in our communications mediums. Never have different uniforms reflected a rich diversity that seeks to unite and brighten the UPCSA rather than divide. Our assessment as a committee is that the UPCSA brand is becoming much stronger, solid and well-known for all the positive things within the society we live and work in.

5. UPCSA Social Media Policy

In our previous report to the General Assembly, we referred to the Communications Policy, with a special focus on social media policy, and raised a concern that our members are not well vest and educated about the policy. One of the reasons why we proposed to have Presbytery Communicators was to ensure that workshops are conducted in our Congregations amongst our members to ensure that they are well informed and understand the church's social media policy. This has unfortunately not happened, accounting for the reason why many of our members ignore it. Unless this is addressed, the UPCSA brand reputation will remain at risk. We aim in the ensuing period to pay attention to this aspect.

6. Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act)

In the last report to the General Assembly, we highlighted the need for our Sessions and Presbyteries to acquaint themselves with the provisions of the POPI Act as promulgated in South Africa. This is especially true as the personal information of members is captured and distributed. We realize that this piece of legislation is still not adhered to by many of our Sessions. Personal information of members, inclusive of their phone numbers, is still being made available and published without their consent. This is against the law. The Committee will conduct a workshop with the Presbytery Clerks in the 2nd quarter to ensure that they are aware of the provisions of this Act.

7. UPCSA Communications mediums

The Committee has adopted various mediums to maximize our reach to the entire denomination. This would ensure that there is communication specific to members in terms of age and areas of interest. Such are inclusive of the following.

7.1. UPCSA website

As outlined in our previous report to the General Assembly, our website is under continuous upgrading and updating. It continues to house major and useful information about the church, and as we stated in the same report, 'it is a space to be used by the General Assembly Committees, Fellowships and other structures of the Denomination to widely cover the activities that manifest the life and work of the Denomination.

In the period under review (July 2023 – March 2024), the website received 34506 views as compared to 29632 views since the General Assembly in 2023, which once more demonstrates significant growth.

7.2. UPCSA Facebook

The UPCSA Facebook remains one of the most effective and efficient means of communication in the church. It also remains a medium through which members are made to interact on critical matters affecting our church and society. To ensure that offensive materials are not posted on the page, we have ensured that every post is approved by the Administrators before it goes live.

Since the last General Assembly in 2023, we have been able to reach over 78900 (+521%) people with 28400 (+183%) post engagements. The number of followers has increased to 5836.

It is pleasing to note that the viewership of our Facebook is substantially on the rise. Again, as reported in our last report, this can be ascribed to the useful postings that appear on our pages, which are appealing to members of the Denomination and society in general.

7.3. Presbyterian Link

Much progress has been made with the publication of the church newsletter, Presbyterian Link since the General Assembly last year. Beyond the Assembly, the Presbyterian Link has seen substantial improvement. The newsletter is now published every month and the distribution has also substantially improved. It is also pleasing that we are receiving feedback from members with comments that assist in improving future editions. Our special thanks in this regard goes to the Moderator and the General Secretary who are providing leadership and leading from the front to ensure that there is material for publication.

The Presbyterian Link is providing a useful platform for information provision, education, and engagement. While the Committee is still to establish the reach in terms of numbers, we can safely report that the publication is reaching all our Presbyteries and a substantial number of our Congregation. The Committee will be able to determine this once the Presbyterian Communicators are appointed and operational.

We are also pleased to report that the Presbyterian Link is compiled and designed internally by Committee members without any expenses from the church. The work of these volunteer designers is heartily commended.

7.4. Twitter account (now X)

The Twitter account (X) was introduced mainly to reach the young population in our denomination, and to publish instant and motivational messages. Sadly, this medium has not seen much success. The Committee has discussed and assessed the relevance and need for the medium and agreed that efficiently coordinating the medium can serve a useful purpose. Some members of the Committee, especially younger members, were requested to work out a proposal of how we can make this more effective.

7.5. Tik Tok

As an appeal to the younger generations in the church, the Committee decided to open a TikTok platform. **TikTok** allows users to watch, create, and share short videos online. That way, with this platform it will enable young people to engage more under the **hashtag #christiantiktok** to reach fellow believers, following on trends that show off our church regalia and communicating more videos of what is happening in the congregations. Creativity is required for this page as it will need to be active at all costs. This means posting daily or reposting from congregational pages for more views. This medium is proving to be one of the most popular ones and its efficiency will only be able to be measured in the next report.

8. QR code (Quick responsa code)

QR code contains the data for a locator, an identifier, and for web-tracking. This has been introduced to make known the social media pages and the website. Seemingly congregants are not as informed about the website or social media pages unless they stumble upon them on the '**for you page**' (FYP). With all posters and Presbyterian Link monthly issues, the QR code will be incorporated.

9. Church Coordinates

One of the challenges faced by the Denomination is access to our church buildings. More often our members visiting our areas find it difficult to locate our churches, especially in rural areas where the GPS or Waze is unable to locate them easily. The Committee discussed the matter and agreed that one of the ways we can locate our churches is the use of coordinates, over and above the addresses which in rural areas is not easy to locate. For this reason, we have allocated the task to one Committee member to investigate the feasibility of using coordinates to locate our church buildings and house the information on our website, together with the addresses of each of the churches. This is a task that will take some time to execute, but worth the time. A progress report in this regard will be provided in our next report.

10. Conclusion

The Communications Committee takes the opportunity to thank all those who have cooperated to ensure the success of its work. We are satisfied with the work done so far, however, there is still a lot of space to cover. While our internal communication is seeing a lot of success, we are still found wanting when it comes to public media, especially where we need to respond to societal issues. This will be the focus of the Committee in the ensuing year. Special thanks to the General Secretary and the Moderator who have led from the front in ensuring that our church communicates. The fact that none of them ever missed an opportunity to provide us with written articles, speaks of their commitment to this work. All in the UPCSA are dearly thanked.

11. Proposals

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.
2. The Executive Commission notes the progress in the implementation of the General Assembly decisions.
3. The Executive Commission notes that there are still some Presbyteries that have not yet appointed Presbytery Communicators, and further instructs them to appoint them before the end of October 2024.
4. The Executive Commission notes with disappointment the slow pace with which our Presbyteries subscribe to the MyPresby IT Church Management System and encourages them to make efforts to subscribe.
5. The Executive Commission encourages Presbyteries to conduct workshops for Session Clerks on the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPI Act).

6. The Executive Commission encourages Presbytery Clerks and Communicators to provide information about the work done in their Presbyteries, which will be widely shared in the Denomination and beyond.
7. The Executive Commission notes the attempts of the Communications Committee to develop systems that will make it easy for people to find the location of our churches.

**Prepared by
Benny Boshelo
On behalf of the Communications Committee**

UPCSA CHURCH OFFICE & HR COMMITTEE (COHRC)

Report to 2024 Executive Commission

The COHRC currently comprises the following members: Glynis Goyns (Convenor), Thandiwe Hlam, Ryan Johnson (General Treasurer), Nonceba Mashalaba, Kennedy Mhone, Mpendulo Mkentane, Lungile Mpetsheni (General Secretary), Lydia Neshangwe (Moderator), Faresy Sakala, Awedzani Nemaikhwe and Inette Taylor (Specialist). Regular meetings have been held remotely every second month, in general with good participation by all. There have also been several additional special meetings as required.

Routine HR tasks have continued smoothly and efficiently, including year-end and mid-year staff appraisals with capacity building or remedial action as needed. Further training was provided in formulating concrete SMART indicators for more effective performance measurement and evaluation. There is a slow but steady improvement in this process.

The decisions of General Assembly, the adjusted UPCSA 5-year strategic plan, and the MaD "Going for Growth Programme" have all been intentionally addressed with the following actions:

1. 5-year Strategic Plan Item 26: A project management system has been established using the SharePoint platform. This is being steadily populated and an increasing number of people are making use of this facility, which allows for central storage of all UPCSA records using cloud technology. Staff have been trained in the use of this platform and video training has been sent to the Convenors of GA Committees. Both the Finance Committee and COHRC are using this platform. This facility also addresses Item 31 of the Strategic Plan which calls for a robust communications system at minimal cost.
2. In addressing Item 36 of the Strategic Plan, the COHRC consciously holds the transnational character of the UPCSA in mind in addressing vacancies despite the challenges of visas and work permits, and in fulfilling its other GA obligations.
3. MaD Going for Growth: Visual material has been discussed and is currently under further consideration for use in the Church Office and on all outgoing Church Office correspondence. When this work has been finalised, it will be discussed with the Mission and Discipleship Committee for their approval before introducing it.
4. Further work has been done in exploring transnational opportunities to include all our young people in the concept of a programme for interns. This is still a work in progress and acceptable means of accreditation are still being explored. Creative options have been considered and are currently being explored for ways to implement youth opportunities as interns regardless of internal financial constraints. The intention is to present a way forward at the 2025 General Assembly.
5. A supplementary report will be presented to the Executive Commission concerning the process of finding a suitable successor to the General Secretary.

Although the COHRC wasn't specifically allocated responsibilities with regard to the plan to address inequalities and inequities in the UPCSA, it has attempted to address youth, gender, racial, and transnational issues intentionally in all aspects of its work.

My thanks go to every one of the COHRC members, all of whom bring their individual gifts and abilities into this space in serving our Church Office needs. Most of all, gratitude goes to God for providing us with the resources and abilities to serve the denomination effectively.

Proposals

1. The Executive Commission receives the report.

Rev Glynis Goyns