

THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA



UPCSA

Presbyterian Link

AUGUST,
2024
EDITION

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Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe: Moderator of General Assembly

YOU HAVE THE POWER!
Exodus 1:15-21 (Shiprah and Puah)

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiprah and Puah, 16 “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” 17 **The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.** 18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?” 19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.” 20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. 22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

THE POWER DISEQUILIBRIUM

This sermon is based on the conference theme based on verse 17 of the Exodus passage above. In all contexts, some have more power than others. Political contexts. Economic. Social. Technological.

Environmental. Religious. Relational. Cultural. Marital. Parental. Even in fellowships.

1. POWER IN THE WRONG HANDS

- a) Gives license to kill. Shiprah and Puah could have taken the opportunity to kill the babies because they did not have babies of their own. The power to destroy.
- b) Gives license to equalize. By killing the Hebrew babies, they would reduce the male population and hopefully create an equality in the already existing male and female power disequilibrium of their society. The power to control outcomes.
- c) Gives license to exploit and to abuse. Shiprah and Puah were given such uncontrolled power to abuse and exploit among the Hebrew families.
- d) Gives licence to create war. The king’s order created a war - a man using women against women. In modern days this war may manifest in society’s viewing the wrongs of women as worse than the wrongs of men.

2. POWER IN THE RIGHT HANDS

- a) Is the power to face evil/impossible choices, as Shiprah and Puah found themselves between a rock and a hard place. They did not shrink away from the great and terrible order to kill. They did not run away to another land.
- b) Is the power of compassion. Compassion for the male, the boy child. Today do not neglect the boy child while in the process of empowering the girl child. For example, here’s a need to teach the boy child how to handle an empowered girl child otherwise problems like GBV will never end.
- c) Is the power of risk-takers for life giving, for life preservation, for good, not for selfish motives. The two midwives had to take a great risk in the way they approached the issue.
- d) Is the power of creative alternatives. We need to become so powerful in creating alternatives that we become, as Jesus instructed, “shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

This can manifest in the following three attitudes as we do life and ministry:

“Jochebed, the Unsung Spirit-Filled Hero” Exodus 2:1-10

- TANA attitude – this is an abbreviation for “There Are No Alternatives.” In reality Shiprah and Puah had no real alternatives other than to go on the killing mission that the king had ordered them.
- TAFE attitude – this is an abbreviation for “There Are Few Alternatives.” When we only have a few alternatives in our lives, in our churches and in our fellowships, we will face some type of death. Incidentally, the Shona word “tafa” actually means “we are dead.”
- TATA attitude – this is an abbreviation for “There are Thousands Alternatives!” This is the attitude we should operate in with the power of the Holy Spirit. Shiprah and Puah operated in this attitude and they were summoned by the king and they told him that the Hebrew women were too strong such that by the time the midwives got to them they would have already given birth quickly so that the midwives do not have the opportunity to kill them upon birth. Talk about being “wise as serpents and innocent as doves!”

3. **YOU HAVE THE POWER!** - Despite the factors that are before you.

Please note that in the book of Exodus, the first act of courage is of TWO WOMEN, the midwives. The next act of courage in chapter 2 is of another woman, MOSES' MOTHER'S strategy to hide him in the reeds. Next is the courage of Moses' sister, MIRIAM who negotiated with Pharaoh's daughter a strategy to get a wet nurse for him. Next is of PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER herself, who told her father that she was keeping a Hebrew baby for herself. All this was happening while Pharaoh thinks he's the main power player of the land!

The lesson? Know that whoever you are, you have power. UPCSA, we have power. Fellowship of Women, you have power! Not power in the wrong hands. Not the wrong use of power. Not power to control others. Not power to hurt others.

- It is Holy Spirit power – use it and you will overcome great obstacles.
- It is private power – use it and you will do great things in public.
- It is prayer power – use it and it will give you the action you need to implement.

Exodus 2:1-10

1 Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. 6 She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “This is one of the Hebrew babies,” she said.

7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, “Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?”

8 “Yes, go,” she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, “Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.” So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “I drew him out of the water.”

CHARACTERISTICS OF BEING SPIRIT-FILLED FROM JOCHEBED

1. SPIRIT-FILLED STORY:

The story begins with: “Now a man...” yet the story is not about him but about three women of different age groups and different backgrounds. Yet all the action of the story is caused by a woman, moved by a woman and the course of destiny is changed and re-directed by a woman. The unsung hero, Jochebed, or Sis' Jo, as we shall call her today.

YOU'RE HIDDEN. HIDDEN FOR YOUR SAFETY!
HIDDEN BUT NOT BURIED.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE THE MAIN CHARACTER,
BUT YOU CAN HAVE A SPIRIT-FILLED IMPACT.

2. SPIRIT-FILLED IDENTITY

Jochebed is mentioned by name only in two places, in genealogy listings (Exo 6:20 and Num 26:59).

Jochebed is a Hebrew name is *yokheved* meaning "YHWH is glory." She is the first person in the Bible to have a name with the divine element yah, a shortened form of YHWH. She acts plans and implements her plan to save her child because she has the name of God in her, and therefore the plan of God in her. She already carries YHWH inside her, and so she is simply acting in partnership with YWHR.

Believe that you too have the Spirit of God in you.

HE THAT IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN HE THAT IS
IN THE WORLD. Believe it and act it out.

3. SPIRIT-FILLED STRATEGY

What kind of a strategy is this:

- To fall pregnant knowing the baby will be killed! Contraceptive/prevention... rather than suffer death of a child. **Strategy of faith. The faith to start.**
- To raise a child knowing it will be thrown in the river! You can't own/possess that child. **Strategy of holding loosely. God owns your plans/ambitions.**
- To let go of your baby in a basket and watch. There are many dangers in the water – malarial mosquitoes, crocodiles, etc. **Strategy of foolishness.** "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are saved it is the power of God." (1 Cor 1:18). We need to learn strategies of foolishness like not taking things personally, but believing in God's power instead. Know how to fight – by putting God and God's will first.

4. SPIRIT-FILLED PARTNERSHIPS:

Sis' Jo created many partnerships and coaching strategies.

Learn some coaching! Coach yourself (Jochebed). Coach your baby (Moses). Coach your children (Miriam). Miriam's children who were different but raised to work together and to achieve their different destinies: Aaron's graceful leadership, Miriam's humility, Moses a prophet of God. Coach others (the princess). Coach husband – we need male champions! **Spirit-filled partnerships!**

5. SPIRIT-FILLED OUTCOMES:

- a) Moses started crying! Why Moses? But his CRYING caused his salvation. So CRY OUT to God!
- b) Sis' Jo's choice of hiding place - the river of death! Why would Jochebed put her baby in the same river where the Hebrew baby boys were being drowned? I would hid my baby far away from that river. It is because God is the river of life and can turn the river of death into the river of life! And God did this for baby Moses.

Revelations 22:1-2 says, "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

The river of life, is the river of our revival. It symbolizes our being buried/dying, and then our resurrection! Renewal. Revival. All through the power of God's Holy Spirit. We have access to that revival by submitting to God's Holy Spirit. And we will be able to do great things for God and to overcome and make progress at various levels, from the personal level to the denominational level.



Bro, Benny Boshielo
Convener: Communications Committee

Editorial

Celebrating Our Women – Mmago bana o swara thipa ka bogaleng

The above Northern Sotho idiom fully describes what it means to be a woman. **Mmago bana o swara thipa ka bogaleng** (a mother handles a knife on the sharp side). This demonstrates not only the caring and considerate side of women, but most importantly, their bravery.

August month is 'women's month in South Africa'. It is a month through which we remember the bravery of women in the fight against an oppressive system of government, and its replacement by a caring, orderly and just system of government. Though the month of August is declared women's month in South Africa, the bravery of women on this universe can be traced centuries ago from the Holy Bible, where we remember and celebrate brave women like Esther, Ruth Rachel, Hannah, Deborah, Hannah and many others. We also celebrate brave women in Zambia and Zimbabwe who were part of the contingent of human beings who fought for justice, peace and freedom in their countries. The iconic film called

Neria which was shot in Zimbabwe depicting this bravery of women tells it all.

Today we speak of great women, who are soldiers of the cross, spreading the Gospel across countries and the continents. These are the great evangelist, Christ like in character, on whom we rely to justify our living God, for by their deeds and messages the world changes.

We also celebrate our own Moderator of General Assembly, a woman of honour and wisdom, who also leads the All Africa Conference of Churches and World Christian bodies, all in and for the Glory of God.

The Presbyterian Link team joins the millions of people in the universe as we celebrate these special creations of God. They indeed are the builders of peace, homes and countries. For by their nature, they are born to nurture both humans and the world. We will forever indebted to them for who and what they are.

This issue of Presbyterian Link is dedicated to these women. Rather than long articles of praise and explanation, this issue celebrates our women pictorially, for all and sundry to see how special they are. It captures the women in their conference praising God, and thanking him for the gift of life.

Presbyterian Link also congratulate women for their successful conference which they held in Amathole Presbytery. It is our hope that this conference enabled them to recharge as they return to the world to fish and introduce Jesus Christ to all those who do not know him yet. We also pray for the Young Women as they also prepare for their Denominational Conference. It is our hope that the Lord God will guide them as they prepare for this conference.

We invite you on board to journey with us through this August Edition of the Presbyterian Link.

Enjoy



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Limpopo Presbytery

The Fellowship Of Men In Stuartville Congregation

The Fellowship of Men in Stuartville, Limpopo held a Lekgotla with Young Men in Lebowakgomo on the 31st August 2024. The Lekgotla was convened to provide an opportunity to engage on life issues, especially regarding mentoring and coaching. Elder Lekoba, an experienced Social Worker made a presentation on the concepts of coaching and mentoring, while Rev Lethabo Mabotja addressed the young men about the role which the FOM can play to shape their lives. Elder Benny Boshielo spoke about a partnership between men and young men in the growth of the church, while Ngoako PHEME addressed the rationale for the Lekgotla. Thereafter the Lekgotla had a father-child relationship on a wide variety of issues including, but not limited to marriage, dating, sexuality issues, bullying and mentoring of boy children. Recommendations from the Lekgotla will be presented to the FOM Branch structure for consideration.







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Limpopo Presbytery

Fellowship Of Women

The Fellowship of Women in Limpopo held their Conference and Fundraising event at the University of Limpopo, within the bounds of the Willian Samson Congregation. Other women from within the Northern Cluster, like EGoli and Tshwane joined them in this celebration of Christ. Just another way in which we grow the Kingdom of God.





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FELLOWSHIP OF WOMEN

Theme: "Spirit-filled Women pursuing God's plan"
Flowing from our reading of Exodus 1:17













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Congratulations!



**LET US CELEBRATE WITH THE REV PROF FUNDISWA KOBO
TO ALL IN THE UPCSA**

The Presbytery of Tshwane brought this to our attention with a request that this be shared with all in the UPCSA.

Rev Prof Dr Fundiswa Kobo has been appointed as the Chair of the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History, and Missiology at Unisa. This is a source of joy and thanksgiving, especially in August, a women's month. Congratulations to MaZikhali.

Prof Kobo is the Clerk of Tshwane Presbytery and a Minister of Mamelodi East Congregation. May we continue to pray with/for her and give her the requisite support.

Warmest regards,

Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni
(Rhadebe)

General Secretary
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
Secretary – Africa Communion of Reformed Churches



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SEPTEMBER

26 - 29
2024

HOST: MAMELODI
GARDENS
CONGREGATION



LASEV RESORT

Plot 185 Rooiwal Rd
Honingneskraans

TSHWANE PRESBYTERY FELLOWSHIP OF WOMEN *2nd Annual Conference*



"Stronger Together"

THEME: "SPIRIT FILLED WOMEN PERSUING GODS PLAN" - EXODUS 1:17



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Participants at the Accra Confession 20th Anniversary Celebrations. 9 - 12 August in Accra, Ghana





**STUARTVILLE CONGREGATION
CHILDREN MINISTRY
FUN DAY INVITATION**

DATE: 27 JULY 2024

VENUE: MAMOGOSHUDU STATION

TIME: 10H00





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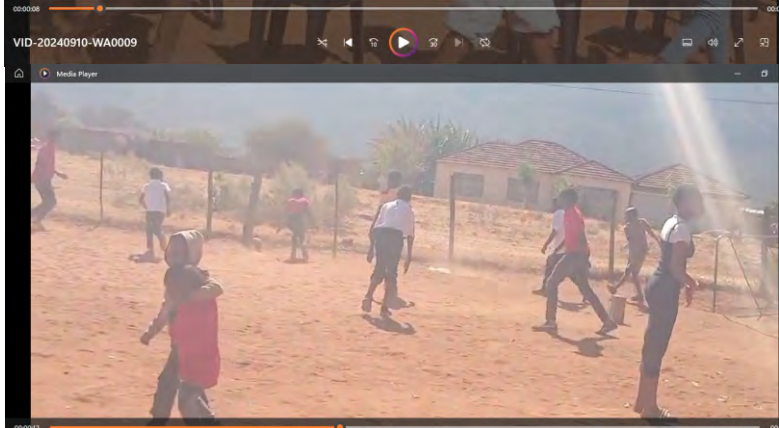
The Children Ministry In Stuartville Congregation

The Children Ministry in Stuartville Congregation held a fun day for children and their teachers on the 27th of July 2024 at their Mamogoshudu Preaching Station. It was a day filled with fun and food. 'Children were treated to lots of traditional food, indigenous games and stories', said the Convener of Children Ministry in Stuartville, Mme Monare Maphutha.

She added that 'these children should be taught to know and appreciate our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ while they are still young'.

We are indeed happy that have enjoyed themselves on the day, together with their teachers' Ms Maphutha said.







SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

FELLOWSHIP_OF_WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

2024 from 21/08/2024 - 25/08/2024

#CAMPDEBORA HIGHLIGHTS

Extract from the Message by the Rev Thompson Mkandawire, Synod of Zambia Clerk and Key note speaker

With over 100 years in existence as a church, what do we have to show for? It is painful to see all years go down the drain and we are left with nothing to show but just stories to tell.

#Rev_Thompson_Mkandawire stirred the women to think church growth and development. He stressed to the crowd that there is no need to step on others but we should rather encourage each other to take the church to heights never thought of.

He likened the church to the former President of a certain Sub-saharan nation who did his best to thwart justice. There was no television station in this nation for a very long time. He would land at the airport from international and local trips where he called out the common slogan; "Kwacha!". Then ask the question, who is in pain/hungry and everyone would respond; no one.

#Let's avoid the issue of arm-twisting each other.

His keynote sermon was focused on raising and putting resources together in order to preach Christ. The church must already be putting together literature that we need to use to spread the gospel.

He further encouraged the women not to be intimidated by those who are holding on to strategic positions. Those daring to resign once questioned should be allowed to do so and see what they would do.

Endeavor to do well to others all the time. Step away from being a stumbling block to others.

We need to be a viable missional church.

1. Evangelise to others
2. Disciple others
3. No injustice
4. Use own money to support mission works

This whole thing is based self introspection.

Yesu nipempa kambani na mtima wanga.

#Camp_Deborah for the Fellowship of Women held in Chilanga





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SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

Fellowship of Women's Conference
2024 from 21 - 25 August 2024
#CAMPDEBORA HIGHLIGHTS





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PRESBYTERY OF ZIMBABWE

Fellowship of Women National Conference
22 - 25 August 2024





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SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES

We welcome submissions of articles from anyone. Please submit with pictures if possible. The Editors of the Presbyterian Link reserves the right to edit or adapt the articles.

FEEDBACK

Presbyterian Link is happy to receive feedbacks regarding any article. This will help us to improve on our future editions.

COMPILATION AND GRAPHICS

Bro. Solly Maluleka

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence and all articles should be directed to.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rev. Vusi Mkhungo – Acting General Secretary

EDITORIAL

Elder Benny Boshielo – Convener: Communications Committee

CORRESPONDENCE

Elder Christine Kasambara – Coordinator

CORRESPONDING EMAIL

gensec@unitingpresbyterian.org