



THE UNITING  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
IN SOUTHERN  
AFRICA

# Presbyterian Link

SEPTEMBER

*Edition*

2024

*Linking all Presbyterians together*

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**Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe: Moderator of General Assembly**

### UPCSA Celebrating 25<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary

Dear friends,

Today we celebrate that God used us, notwithstanding our diversity, to produce the UPCSA and we submitted to the will of God and obeyed. For the last 25 years, God has led us, corrected us, fed us, given us a hunger for righteousness, and preserved us as a church. We have emerged stronger together at 25! Yet this side of heaven there's always room for improvement.

It has been said, "The perfect place in the whole wide world is in the will of God." So, at 25 let us together as a church pray to re-align to the will of God so that we can fulfil God's prophetic and missional purposes in our time. We are ready for a revival as the same church that God has loved and preserved. Let us pray that this is the season of God's revival of our hearts and minds so that we may fulfil God's purposes and will for us.

So how do we position ourselves for a spiritual revival? We can be tempted to see 25 years as our own achievement, yet it is the Lord that has brought us this far. So in humility, we acknowledge God's leading. Humility is the only container that can hold a revival. Internalize that... All our other containers have holes in them and therefore cannot hold God's revival. Humility is the only container that is mature enough and

strong enough to re-open our eyes to the spiritual truth that we are first and foremost citizens of the kingdom of God and as children of God, we must re-seek the will of God for our complex times.

This humility container is made up of three intertwined prerequisites for a revival to happen among us, in our time – intercession, confession, and submission.

a) **Intercession** is the first requirement for a revival. We deliberately pray for a revival in recognition that we need a higher power than ourselves and our own ideas, opinions to run our churches and to grow our churches.

b) **Confession** is the second requirement for a revival. It says that we recognize our inadequacies and our unworthiness before God. It says we recognize that we have neglected God's basic requirement of us which is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength," the vertical axis of the cross, and to "Love your neighbour as yourself," the horizontal axis of the cross. Confession admits that it is not the cross when it does not have both the love for God and the love for people.

c) **Submission** to God is the third requirement for God's spiritual renewal. Submission to God's methods and not our own. It takes humility to submit. It takes vulnerability to submit. It takes willingness to submit. But above all, it takes courage to submit because the easier road is the path of control, where we are in charge. It is through submitting to God that we will rise up to become the prophets and prophetesses of our time, Spirit-driven prophets who combine courage with submission.

So intercession is the posture we need, confession is the attitude we need, and submission is the stance we need. Then we will be confident of this, that "he who

began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil 1:6). The 25th anniversary is the perfect time for us to introspect and seek to align ourselves with the will of God.

- ✓ Are you worried about the state of relationships in the church today? Don't add fuel to the fire - pray for a revival.
- ✓ Are you dissatisfied with the level of church growth today? Don't grumble and complain - pray for a revival.
- ✓ Are you tired of divisiveness and polarization in the church? Don't join the madness - pray for a revival.
- ✓ Are you unhappy with the financial state of the church today? Don't point fingers – pray for a revival.

God promises the following:

**Ezekiel 37:5&6**

“I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.” (v.5b)

“I will put breath in you, and you will come to life.” (v. 6b)

What a promise! So let us continue to be ‘stronger together for a revival.’ Then we can truly say: Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary UPCSA!



**Bro, Benny Boshielo Convener:  
Communication Committee**

**EDITORIAL**

The month of September in the UPCSA concludes a period of Denominational Conferences of our Fellowships, save for the Fellowship of Young Women, which hold their conference at the beginning of October. For our Fellowships, this is their time to reflect on the work done in the previous year, plan and most importantly, reenergize for the next year. Presbyterian Link was part of these conferences and has been sharing the proceedings with all Presbyterians wherever they are. We are also cognizant of the fact that these conferences take very useful decisions which aim to support the UPCSA Vision and Mission priorities, but most importantly, decisions which seek to contribute to the growth of the Church of Christ. For some Fellowships, the year 2024, was a year of elections where new leaders were elected to office.

Ours is to continue to support those whom the Lord has chosen to lead to ensure that indeed they succeed in working for the growth of our Denomination.

The month of September in South Africa is called Heritage Month, celebrated on the 24th which was originally called Shaka Day. It is during this month that South Africans of all races celebrates the diversity of their cultures through dress,



dance and food. These celebrations are also seen within our Denomination, where many of our Congregations designated a Sunday and encouraged members to attend services clad in their traditional attires. Here we see the beauty of our Creator, the colorful nature of creation and the unity of the people of God in diversity.

This edition of Presbyterian Link will carry pictures of some of these celebrations. As we say goodbye to the month of September, we enter the month of October, which for us in the UPCSА, is dedicated as 'A month of Mission, themed "UPCSА Going for Growth – Month of Mission 2024.' We are already in week one with the Devotions under the theme "Unity with, in and through God. In His image." We encourage the Mission and Discipleship Committees to take this program seriously and with purpose, to ensure that all in the UPCSА embrace this program. The General Assembly Committee on Mission and Discipleship will be issuing a series of Devotions during the month, which will be carried in our different communications mediums.

Let us all be part of this important mission program. This edition of Presbyterian Link carries some publications from the Committee which are worthy of reading and sharing with all in our Congregations. The new General Secretary of our Denomination, Rev, Dr George Marchinkowski, has now formally resumed his duties from the beginning of October.

The General Secretary has already hit then ground running, and we are all looking forward to his leadership. Receiving the baton from yet another son of the UPCSА, Rev, Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, it is our hope that his leadership will continue to propel the work of the UPCSА forward. We include in this edition an introductory letter from the Convener of COHRC, which is a welcome letter to the General Secretary and an introductory letter to the staff and the UPCSА family. Presbyterian Link wishes Rev, Dr Marchinkowski well and success during his term. Please enjoy this edition of the Presbyterian Link and please share with others to ensure a much wider coverage to the UPCSА family and beyond.



**Rev, Dr George Marchinkowski: General Secretary**

#### ON THE ROAD IN THE PRESBYTERIAN FAMILY

Since being elected to succeed Dr Mpetsheni as General Secretary of the UPCSА on 24 June 2024 and having been recognised on the 27<sup>th</sup>, I've experienced a rollercoaster of experiences and emotions. The grieving which inevitably goes along with leaving a congregation and the realisation that my work life will change dramatically after 26 years as a minister in the congregation. From now on, when I preach, I will be 'always a Guest'. But then there is also an excitement about the opportunity, and an enthusiasm for the new work.

The "handover process" envisaged by the Church Office and HR Committee and facilitated by Dr Mpetsheni involved a part-time two-month programme in July and August. From July already, I was included (as an observer) in several online meetings of committees on which the GS serves. I

found this very interesting and learned a lot. Did you know that apart from the statutory bodies (The Executive Commission and General Assembly) on which the GS is a member (ex Officio), the GS serves on several other Commissions and Committees: The Assembly Standing Commission, Assembly Business, Church Office & HR, Communications, Finance and Priorities & Resources. The GS also chairs the Ecumenical Relationships Committee. Each of these involves ministers and elders of the UPCSA carrying out work of the Assembly. It is a privilege to serve on these.

In the first two months, I met with Dr Mpetsheni twice in person (in July in Cape Town and in August in Kempton Park) and on many occasions online. He was generous with his time, advice and provided invaluable insight into the various arenas in which the UPCSA is involved. He was very detailed and meticulous in passing over information and insight. The previous GS sent correspondence to all our ecumenical partners both in Southern Africa and internationally, introducing me as his successor. I am grateful to him for his kind thoroughness in this regard.

The Central Office is a happy and dynamic place which works as a team to facilitate the network of Synods, Presbyteries and congregations that constitute our denominations. Tasks in this regard involve general administration, the administration of systems of communication and connection, the selection, training and support of the Ministry, and denominational finance. Each member of Staff contributes to the denomination's wellbeing and it is my privilege to serve among them.

It may interest you to know that the GS has three primary roles:

- (1) The GS is the UPCSA's **Ecumenical Officer** (transnationally and internationally). This involves representing and arranging representation of the UPCSA in the Councils of Churches and fraternally with our ecumenical partners;

- (2) The GS is the **Manager of the Central Office**. There are four senior Office bearers at the Central Office and the GS is the 'first among equals'. This involves taking care of the team and working through challenges in the three departments. The Central Office is a resource to the Church and needs to remain motivated and compelled by the UPCSA's Vision and Mission;
- (3) The GS stands in the middle of the **Network of Councils** (Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions/Church Councils) and **Committees**. The GS has an opportunity to mediate, to encourage, and to maintain the bonds of unity.

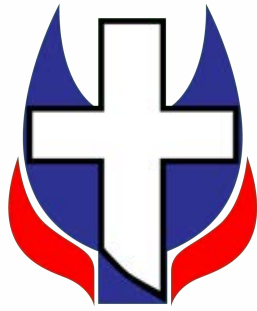
So – there it is. That's the role I am privileged to fill for the next 5 to 10 years. It has its share of challenges and victories.

In the month of September, I was able to visit the **Presbyteries of Thekwini and Drakensberg** to assist with a legal matter and to visit a property on the South Coast that our new Business unit, **Pele Development NPC** would like to develop. Then, I visited the **Fellowship of Men** for a day of their annual Conference and to represent the UPCSA at the **General Assembly of the Uniting Congregational Church**, our close fraternal partner. In the last week of September, I travelled to Johannesburg by car and **moved into the GS's office in Tiyo Soga House**. I now feel very much at home with my books and other personal items surrounding me here.

I covet your prayers and would welcome communication with the family Presbyterian. There is a lot on this plate but never too much so that it will keep me from interacting with you.

Warm regards





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**THE A-Z TRIBUTE TO THE REV DR LUNGILE MPETSHENI**

- A- Asset - an asset to the church, an asset in being a helpful leader.
- B- Brave- bravery and courage to take on the role of GS in a transnational church.
- C- Compassionate-to the cause of youth, to the cause of many groups, to the cause of women.
- D- Diligent- going above and beyond the call of duty.
- E- Encourager- we call you our Barnabas – the Barnabas of the UPCSA.
- F- Face – of the church, the joyful face of the church.
- G- Grace, even when dealing with unreasonable people.
- H- Humble, a person of many achievements but did not Lord it over us” though he could have.
- I- Intelligent, not just academic but S.I, C.I, and Rel I.
- J- Juggling, multiple roles- family man, church man, community roles.
- K- Knowledgeable- about the history of the church; and about many issues.
- L- Library, of information on the church and on political issues.
- M- Mediation, one of his real achievements in the UPCSA.
- N- Non-judgemental- in being open to hear from all sides.
- O- Objective – able to engage with people of diverse...
- P- Perseverance – during times when you could have given up on your leadership.
- Q- Qualifies – for the job and for filling many gaps you filled.
- R- Respectful, is one of the qualities that many ministers struggle with.
- S- Serving, at local, regional, continental, and global levels.
- T- Thorough, in making sure that each corner is fulfilling its role.
- U- Unity, a goal and aim that he promoted year after year.
- V- Value – addition – adding value to every aspect of the UPCSA that he engaged in.
- W- Wisdom, which you drew from your deep spirituality.
- X- X-ray vision into situations by having the ability to see beyond the outward appearances.
- Y- Years, 10 years is not a joke, to successfully give to the church.
- Z- Zoom! The master of Zoom meetings during COVID lockdown season.

LUNGILE, MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU. YOU CAME AND YOU LEFT YOUR MARK, A POSITIVE MARK!  
YOUR LEGACY AS THE GS LIVES ON.

## FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCH CHOIRS & MUSICIANS



Fellowship of Church Choirs and Musicians would like to pass their greatest gratitude to Rev. Dr. Mpetsheni for being the remarkable General Secretary of the UPCSA. His leadership style comprises of:

- Teaching the word of God
- Honesty
- Putting people first
- Positive influence
- Resilience
- Ensuring that people understand and implement UPCSA vision and mission statement

Grateful is an inadequate word for how the FCCM feels. For your unwavering support throughout the years you have been the General Secretary of the UPCSA. Supporters like you have shown us how God's love can change the UPCSA. You have been a good God's servant and through your teachings, we now understand the manual of faith and also the direction the Church of God is currently taking. Thank you for your wisdom. Your leadership has been a guiding light for our denomination, UPCSA.

Your leadership has inspired and uplifted us all. Your participation in the activities of our fellowship is a true blessing. Through your guidance the FCCM is still forging ahead. Thank you for your dedicated leadership.

As you retire from your position, kindly transfer your skill to the next General Secretary and avail yourself for assistance when a need arises. May the Almighty protect you and your family and have a wonderful rest.

## FELLOWSHIP OF YOUTH

**Lesego L Plank (FOY President) Gabriel Mampane (FOY Former President)**

Appreciation and Tribute to the outgoing General Secretary of the UPCSA Rev. Dr Lungile Mphentsheni

The Fellowship of Youth would like to express its sincere gratitude for the exceptional support that you have provided during your tenure in the office. Your guidance, patience, love and encouragement have played a pivotal role in shaping the fellowship for what it is today and assisted in paving a way amidst all the challenges forces that acted against us. May your vision about the UPCSA be realised beyond you, we vow to carry all your teachings into ensuring that the UPCSA realises its strategic goals and remain united in advancing the kingdom of God.

Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, not just a Minister but a father to many of us in the Fellowship of Youth. His mission has been geared towards teaching, and disciplined leadership. A number of young people in the church have been exposed to the CWM Its the exposure of the youth to CWM, his passion for education and the checking on how far are we in terms of our studies and serving as a support system with projects inside and outside of the church

Indeed you have fought a good fight you have finished the race, gladly your faith is still intact and God who has whom you have declared the Author and finisher of your faith shall award you equally according to your faith.



02 October 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

### INTRODUCING THE NEW UPCSА GENERAL SECRETARY



The Revd Dr George Marchinkowski was formally welcomed as our newly appointed General Secretary at the Executive Commission in June this year. Since then, many of you have encountered him as he embarked upon a handover process with the outgoing General Secretary, the Revd Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, and he became increasingly engaged in the work of the church in his capacity as our incoming General Secretary.

He officially took office from the beginning of October, and it gives me great pleasure as Convenor of the Church Office and HR Committee to introduce him formally.

The Rev Dr George Marchinkowski has been a minister in the UPCSА for 26 years. He was born in Cape Town and baptized in the Goodwood Presbyterian Church. He grew up in Bellville where he was confirmed by the Rev Rod Botsis and candidated for the ministry. He attended his first General Assembly in 1992 and was elected to the Youth Committee with the Rev Dr Peter Langerman. He graduated with a BA and BD from Rhodes University in Grahamstown, where he served as the Chair of the Divinity Students Council and as Warden of Livingstone House. From 1996 until Union, Dr Marchinkowski served on the Committee negotiating that process.

He completed his post academic training at Margate United Church and was ordained to the Ministry by the late Rev Vusi Mabaso and the Presbytery of Thekwini (UPCSА). George met Sascha (Marèchal) in Grahamstown and they have been married for 24 years. Together they have two daughters, Leah who is in her first year of studies at Rhodes, and Zoë who is in Grade 10. Dr Marchinkowski has served the congregations of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Edenvale; St Mungo's United Church, Bryanston; and Somerset West United Church in the Western Cape. He has convened several General Assembly Committees including Assembly Business (ABC), Mission & Discipleship (M&D), and Manual. He is a former Moderator of the Presbytery of eGoli (two terms) and of the General Assembly (2010 – 2012), being inducted at the age of 37. He also served as Convenor of the Court of Assembly from 2012 to 2016.

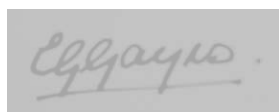


In 2005, Dr Marchinkowski was appointed to a task team which aimed to develop a new mechanism for corporate decision-making in the UPCSA. This culminated in the introduction of the consensus decision-making system being used in the General Assembly and Executive Commission. From 2008 to 2010, he worked on a theological underpinning for this system. As a result, he graduated with a Doctor of Ministry (Church Polity & Church Law) degree from Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, USA in May 2011. While serving as Convener of the General Assembly M&D Committee, Dr Marchinkowski explored how the Church might evolve to minister effectively to a post-Christian world. He considered Christian Spirituality as a possible bridge between faith and the 'spiritual-but-not-religious', graduating with a MTh and PhD from the University of the Free State.

He comes to the position of General Secretary with considerable experience in the UPCSA and ecumenically, a commitment to our Presbyterian heritage, and enthusiasm to explore new ways of being Church into the future.

Please give Dr Marchinkowski your whole-hearted support both in prayer and in whatever practical ways you can as he fulfils his role as General Secretary.

Yours in the love of Christ



**EG Goyns (COHRC Convener)**



**Faith Clinic Bible Study**  
 Topic  
*"Dealing With Your Hurt to Serve God Effectively"*  
 on  
 Thursday 12 September 2024  
 @ 20 : 00hrs - 21 : 30hrs  
 On Google meet



With Rev. Chala Habasila



UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA  
 SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

**Faith CLINIC**  
 TOPIC  
 Wise Parenting  
 Tips: From a  
 - Friend to Friends  
 (part 4)

DATE  
**29 AUGUST**  
 TIME: 20:00 - 21:30

VENUE: GOOGLE MEETING / ZOOM MEETING

SPEAKER  
 DR. REV. AMON  
 KASAMBALA



HOST  
 ELDER DR.  
 STEPHEN GUMBO

MORE INFO: +260 977 377 574 / 0977 811558 / 0977 821288

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**PBO 18/11/13/1612 NPO Number 303-834**  
 Moderator: The Rt Rev Lydia C Neshangwe B. Com, M. Div  
 General Secretary: The Rev Dr George Marchinkowski MTh DMin PhD  
 Clerk of Assembly: The Rev Vusi W Mkhungo DipTh  
 General Treasurer: Mr Ryan Johnson MCom (UP), CIA, MIRMSA

**TRIBUTE BY TIYO SOGA HOUSE  
STAFF MEMBERS TO THE REV DR  
LUNGILE MPETSHENI (RHADEBE)**



As we celebrate the remarkable journey of our esteemed Rhadebe (as we affectionately called him), I feel privileged to reflect on the profound impact they have made during their tenure.

From the very first day in office, Rhadebe demonstrated unwavering dedication, vision, and leadership. His ability to inspire and unite our team has not only advanced our goals but has also fostered a culture of collaboration and respect.

Under Rhadebe's guidance, we navigated challenges that tested our resilience. He faced each obstacle with grace and determination, reminding us that every setback is an opportunity for growth. His strategic insights and commitment to excellence have set a benchmark for all of us.

Beyond his professional achievements, it is Rhadebe's genuine compassion and support for each member of our team that stands out. He has been a mentor, a confidante, and a friend, always encouraging us to strive for our best.

Reflecting on the extraordinary leadership he has shown, particularly during the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a time of uncertainty and anxiety, Rhadebe stood as a beacon of strength and resilience. His proactive approach ensured not only the continuity of our operations but also the safety and well-being of every staff member. Through clear communication and empathetic

support, he helped us navigate the storm together.

Rhadebe consistently prioritized the health of our team while adapting our strategies to meet the demands of a rapidly changing environment. His ability to make tough decisions, while keeping our mission at the forefront, was truly commendable. The innovative solutions implemented under his guidance helped us remain connected and engaged, even from a distance.

Moreover, his unwavering support for mental health and work-life balance during this period demonstrated a deep understanding of our needs as individuals, fostering a culture of care and compassion.

As we look back on this challenging time, we recognize that Rhadebe's leadership was instrumental in guiding us through. He not only kept us focused on our goals but also reminded us of the importance of unity and support for one another.

Thank you, Rhadebe, for your exemplary leadership and dedication. Your commitment has left a lasting impact on the staff, and we are grateful for everything you have done during these trying times.

As we bid farewell to this chapter, we carry forward the values and lessons imparted by Rhadebe. His legacy will continue to inspire us as we embark on new endeavours.

Thank you, Rev Dr Mpetsheni, for your exceptional service, your unwavering support, and your vision that has shaped the Central Office, a Lighthouse of the UPCSA. Through your leadership, we provided "efficient and effective administrative and coordinating service to the UPCSA enabling it to live out its Vision, Mission, and Mission Priorities in Southern Africa as it proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world!"

We wish you every success in your future pursuits and hope you carry fond memories of your time with us.



**Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe: Moderator of General Assembly**

## CHRIST OUR COMPANION

### John 6:5-11

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

As I was praying for a message for the FOM Conference God clearly gave me the feeding of

the 5000. Interestingly, today we gather together as a multitude, so what better text than to learn from a multitude related text. The feeding of the 5000 is a well-known miracle of Jesus. It is significant to note that there are characters that are named, on the one hand, and there are characters that are not named, on the other hand, in this well-known event. And it is through an examination of those two categories that God will speak to us today.

### Philip:

The first named character to examine is Philip. When Jesus asks him how they will feed the great crowd, Philip responds with a 'problem focused mentality,' the kind of mentality that hides behind being practical and factual and rational. So Philip gives Jesus the reality check that it is an impossible job because even "half a year's wages" would not be enough for each one to have a bite of bread. He throws the undeniable facts in Jesus' face.

### Andrew:

Then there's Andrew. And I have to apologize to those who belong to a church named St Andrew's because I'm about to show you the side of Andrew that you would probably rather not hear about. My consolation to you is that Andrew, as a disciple, was human, just like us modern followers of Jesus. Good old Andrew discovers that there's a boy with a lunchbox with food in it – two fish and five loaves! He goes to Jesus and tells Jesus about his discovery. Now look at this scene - this is a grown man, a disciple of Christ, who is conspiring to take away the lunchbox of a little boy! Modern people would say: what's up with that? Who does that? It would seem that Andrew is taking on an 'opportunistic mentality.' But let's put a comma on this alarming development.

### The Other Disciples:

Then there's the rest of the disciples whose names we already know from previous chapters. What was their response to the lunch

crisis? Their silence tells us that they may have taken on any of the following responses.

The 'let-others-solve-it mentality' is real among some of them who said nothing and did nothing. This is a dangerous mentality that we are facing today especially with the gender-based violence pandemic. It is a great development that at this conference the men have decided to launch an anti-GBV campaign and all are wearing black. However, as long as the men pay only lip service to the crisis and do not act or strategize, the crisis will never be solved. We need male advocates and male champions to spread the message of zero tolerance on GBV. This is because men have the social capital, the voice, the patriarchal privilege and the family positioning to speak. We need male champions from all our male colleagues.

Some of the disciples may have had the 'clueless mentality.' They would have been idea-less as to how to solve this food crisis. Unfortunately, there are too many, even today, with that mentality. When problems arise in their families they do nothing and then someone else has to solve their family problems for them. What this means in effect is that they may be the father of the house but they do not fulfil the duties that go with the job. They have the position but not the power. Then they get angry when their wife finds solutions to the problem and they start asking: who's the man of this house?

Then there's the 'wait-and-see mentality' that some of the disciples were operating from. It is commonly seen in the absentee father problem in modern day times. The father may be absent physically through abandoning and neglecting his family. Or the father may be absent emotionally, psychologically or mentally, thereby creating father wounds and bitterness in the children whilst being basically absent and very 'wait-and-see.'

Some of the disciples may have been genuinely facing the 'no-plan mentality.' Many people just have no plan and this is a common

situation. The only problem with this mentality is that things happen and consequences kick in while you are in the no-plan zone. This is seen by the negligence of the boy child in today's societies while there are deliberate efforts in the same societies to teach the girl child in how to be a woman. A typical example is the modern-day pre-marriage events. At the kitchen party the girl is taught on all topics including how to run a home, sex, finances, spirituality, dealing with in-laws, personal hygiene, personal growth etc. The bachelor's party is a different story, however. It is an event where the men have fun, braai meat, drink, receive entertainment, and the teaching is very minimal if any at all. No one tells the boy how to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of all men when they are trying to be men.

#### **Jesus:**

Jesus, however, does two very unbelievable and unexpected things with the lunch crisis. Firstly, Jesus not only listened to Andrew's discovery of the boy's lunchbox, but he also seemed to join in the madness because Jesus went and took the boy's food! Before we rush to the conclusion of the story, let's pause there. Why would a holy man like Jesus join this madness of snatching a little boy's food? And why would Andrew even suggest it to Jesus?

It is because Andrew knows who he's dealing with – he's not dealing with any ordinary rabbi. He is dealing with Jesus who is able to do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." And so he takes his discovery of the boy's food to Jesus.

Secondly, Jesus could have single handedly made food out of nothing, which would have been an even greater miracle. But Jesus chose to teach the 'companionship or partnership mentality' when he deliberately used the boy's food and prayed over it and multiplied it so that it could feed everyone. Jesus could have done it alone! But in acting as a companion Jesus wanted to create the 'faith mentality' in all present. And to create the 'stronger together mentality' in the disciples so that even after he



ascended into heaven they felt spiritually empowered enough to continue with the mission and the miracles without Christ's physical presence.

#### **The Unnamed Characters:**

The characters above were named and known. However, there is the big question that we often overlook – who gave the boy the food he had? The food that was used by Jesus as the seed for the miracle of feeding 5,000! It was someone who was not even mentioned in this story. It was his mama. She is the one who provided food for her little boy, and in doing that she too becomes a partner of Jesus in providing food for a multitude. Yet she is not even mentioned, or recognized, or thanked. Yet she was the only one with a lunch plan!

What are we to learn from this? The lesson is simple. You may not be the main character in your context, or the most known, or the most accomplished or educated, or the most moneyed or resourced, or the most attractive, or the most opinionated, or the most positioned, or having the most power. You may not even be the firstborn – because many of us firstborns are bullied by the lastborn. But what you need to know is that God can use you and your ordinary life to create miracles, to make a difference, even while your name is unknown.

Somebody once said, "God can take a *nobody*, and turn him into a *somebody*, in front of *everybody*, without asking *anybody*." Because Christ is our companion for doing great things for his mission, whether named or not named, recognized or not recognized.

On the other hand you can be a named, known, recognized, positioned person but fail to be effective or to make a difference. Look at Philip or Andrew, or the other disciples in this story. They were the closest people to Jesus, but they had no real solutions to the lunch crisis. We too may be named and recognized but offer no real solutions, no plans, no ideas, but perhaps a whole lot of complaining and criticising of what is. Many are in the business of watching and

waiting for things to happen while not participating.

What we need in order to be effective for the feeding of people spiritually and physically is Christ's companionship. And Christ says as we go on our mission to feed the world, "I will be with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

What this means is that with Christ as our companion we can move to what I call the 'next level' Christianity, where we confidently fulfil whatever God has called us to do in the face of our contextual limitations but knowing that Christ can multiply our efforts. Now we become fearless and courageous in our endeavours.

What this means is that when we post the pictures and updates of our conferences on social media we make sure that we caption it with what God is doing for us at the conference rather than just making it into a fashion show.

What this means is that we re-ignite evangelism, not just at this conference, as a denominational fellowship, but re-ignite evangelism as an individual, as a family, as a congregation, as a presbytery, and as a denomination.

What this means is that we will make a new commitment to serve God whether recognized or not, leader or not, ordinary member or not, with position or not, elected into the DEC on Saturday or not. Because what we need to make a difference for Christ is not the position, or the name, but the companionship of Christ. May God help us to internalize this for ourselves and for those whom we lead.

## Month of Missions Daily Devotions.

Dear Friends and Colleagues

Greetings in the lovely name of our Lord Jesus!

Since 2014 the M&D committee has been sending out daily devotions for the month of October which has been set aside as Missions Month. These have been written by various ministers and members in the denomination and have been well-received. We also supply a preaching plan with sermon outlines for October which you can use in preparing sermons for each Sunday's theme.

When she embarked on her moderatorial journey, the Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe introduced her theme as "Stronger Together." Taking our cue from her, the Mission and Discipleship Committee offers the 2024 Month of Mission devotions and sermon series under this same theme which captures the essence of unity in Christ, highlighting the power of collective action in fulfilling the Great Commission. As we enter this month of mission, we are reminded that the strength of our witness lies in our ability to work together, harnessing our diverse gifts and callings to bring the Gospel to every corner of our communities. Through this focused period of evangelism, we aim to renew our commitment to sharing the love of Christ, reaching out to the lost, and strengthening the bonds that unite us as a church.

## **UPCSA Going for Growth Month of Mission 2024**

For each week of October the devotions will follow a theme culminating with the Sunday Sermon. The themes are as follows: **STRONGER TOGETHER**

Week ending Sunday 6 Oct	– Unity in God
Week ending Sunday 13 Oct	– Unity in the Church
Week ending Sunday 20 Oct	– Unity in Families
Week ending Sunday 27 Oct	– Blessed are the peacemakers.
Last few days of October	– Closing thoughts on Stronger together.

### **There are two parts to the Month of Mission:**

#### 1. The Daily Devotions.

In the past we did devotions for the whole of October, but found that the uptake on weekends was lower. So we will only do weekdays.

The Devotions can be received by email or whatsapp or found on our blog or UPCSA facebook page.

People can subscribe

to the emails at: <https://rb.gy/9uitp> (This is case-sensitive )

to the whatsapp at: <https://rb.gy/batqp> (Enter this into your phone's browser)

The blog is at: <https://emmdev.blogspot.com/>

#### 2. The Sunday Sermon Outlines:

There are four Sundays in October and there are some suggested readings and titles below.

### **You can help us!**

The Going for Growth Project is about unleashing energy and creativity and inspiring growth throughout the denomination. We believe that these devotions will help with this,

**Please share the this information as widely as possible.**

In these challenging times we pray that these messages will be inspirational and a great blessing to many in the UPCSA.

Thanks and God bless,

Richard Mkandawire,

Matshidiso Piroe,

Brian Mazanhi,

Stewart Gordon

and Theo Groeneveld

(Your Mission and Discipleship Month of Mission Team)

# Appendix A: Readings for the Month

Month of Mission Programme 2024

# Stronger Together

	Unity in God	Unity in the Church	Unity in Families	Peacemakers	Concluding thoughts
Mon date Text Title		7. 1Cor12:18-20 Body and Parts	14. 1Tim5:8 Care in the Christian Home	21. Mt.5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers	28. Ecc4:9-12 Strength in Unity
Tue date Text Title	1. Gen1:26-27 In His(Their) Image Theo	8. Rom.15:5-6 One Mind – One Voice	15. Prov.17:17 The gift of brother/sister-hood	22. Ps.85:8 God’s Word of Peace	29. Gen.11:6 United in Purpose
Wed date Text Title	2. John 15:1-4 Vine and Branches	9. Gal.3:28 Neither this nor that – just one in Christ.	16. Joshua 24:15 A Family dedicated to serve God	23. Rom.12:8 Seeking Peace	30. Deut.32:30 Standing together in God’s Power
Thu date Text Title	3. Eph.4:3-6 The bond of peace	10. Eph.2:14 Jesus:Barrier-Breaker & Peacemaker	17. Eph.4:2-3 Keeping the Unity of the Spirit	24. Isaiah 9:6-7 Prince of Peace	31. Ex.17:12 Together we overcome obstacles
Fri date Text Title	4. 1Sa30:3-6 Disunity solved by connecting to God.	11. Col.3:11-14 The clothes of Unity	18. Col.3:13-15 Forgiveness	25. James 3:18 Sowing in Peace	
Sunday DT Text Title	6. John 17 That they may be One....	13. Acts 15:36-40 A Sharp Disagreement	20. Eph 5:21-6:4 Unity in Families	27. 1Sam25 Great Peacemakers	

STRONGER  
Together

# Appendix B: Sermon Outlines

## Sunday 6 Oct: "That they may be one..."

### Introduction to the Reading

*[Not many preachers do an introduction to the Scripture readings, but sometimes it is worthwhile to give a bit of background before a passage is read: This is one of those times...]*

- Our Scripture reading comes from John 17  
It is known as "Jesus' High Priestly Prayer."  
He prays it in the Garden of Gethsemane.  
He prays it as the One who connects God and His people (The function of a Priest)  
He prays it as the Priest who will make a sacrifice (Himself) to connect God and His people.  
He prays, because it is the Priest's task to bring the people before their God.  
But He also reveals and represents God to His people – another of the Priest's tasks.
- The prayer is long and complex.  
**Verses 1-5:** Jesus prays for Himself—His glorification and completion of His mission.  
**Verses 6-19:** Jesus prays for His disciples—their protection, unity, and sanctification.  
**Verses 20-26:** Jesus prays for all future believers—their unity and witness to the world.
- Our reading overlaps from the end of the prayer for the disciples to the prayer for all believers.  
Notice how He prays for many things for the disciples.  
But for the wider church His prayers focus on one clear thing.

### Reading John 17:13-25

"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

<sup>20</sup> "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

<sup>24</sup> "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

<sup>25</sup> "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

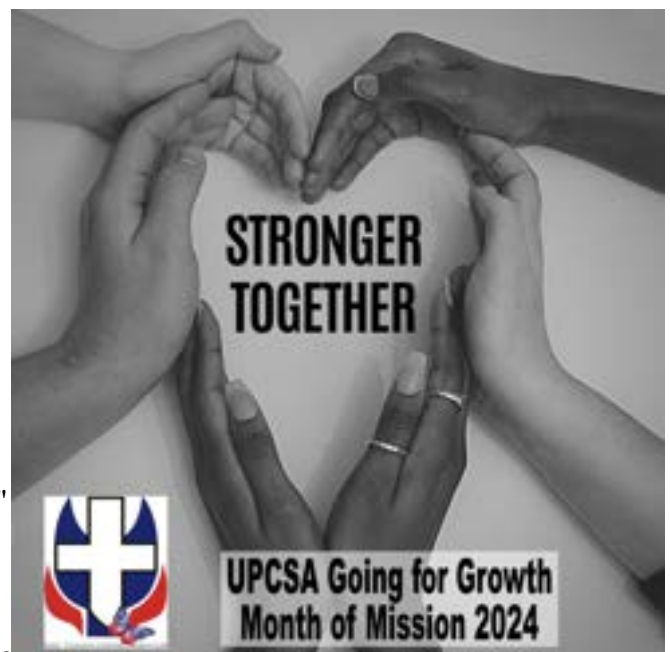
### Introduction to Sermon

The Moderator of our General Assembly is the Right Rev Lydia Neshangwe.

She commenced her duties with an inaugural sermon entitled: "Stronger together."

This is a well-accepted and well-recognised idea. There are a number of quotes from the library of common sense and the school of every day wisdom that reflect this same idea:

1. "United we stand, divided we fall."
2. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."
3. "Divide and conquer."
4. "There is no strength without unity."
5. "Together we can do so much; alone we can do so little."
6. "In union, there is strength."
7. "One finger cannot lift a pebble."





8. "Where there is unity, there is always victory."
9. "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."
10. "Disunity is the enemy of progress."

### The Early Church had an exacting task.

When we examine Jesus' prayer for the disciples, they had an exacting task.

They would later be called the apostles. This Greek word means "sent out". It implies being a *pioneer*.

A pioneer explores, starts, plants and establishes.

We know from Early Church History that the church grew, but that it was not easy.

Christians were persecuted and martyred. They faced lions, gladiators, being set on fire in Nero's garden and much more.

But the Church flourished and grew.

### What does Jesus pray for them?

1. "They're staying in the world after I am gone. May the things I say give them great (the full measure of) joy."  
(May they find joy in my message)
2. "They have my Word, but the world hates them because, like me, they are not of the world any more"  
(May they continue to be heavenly minded in a world that hates them for it.)
3. "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."  
(May they not be escapist, but may they also not be sucked in (protect them from the evil one).)  
(They should not be sucked in because... They are not of this world.)
4. "Sanctify them by Your truth – Your Word is truth"  
Sanctification = Holy-making. Like a goldsmith refines Gold. It is the **process** of becoming holy or more like Jesus.
5. "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."  
May they go in my footsteps, in my ways. May they resemble me.

He then ends with this thought: "For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."

At first this doesn't make sense – Jesus is Holy – Why must He sanctify Himself ???

The answer is that He has one more step to take: He must obey the Father – "Not my will by Your will be done."

He must drink the cup of self-sacrifice so that we can be forgiven.

### How can we summarise His prayer?

- May they find Joy in their connection to Me
- May they know they belong to heaven and not this world
- May they not be escapist or sucked in,
- But may they be in a process of becoming holy because they hear My/Your Word.
- May they go into the world as I did.

### But then the prayer changes

But then Jesus takes the prayer even further.

He prays not just for the Disciples/Apostles/Pioneers/Planters

He prays for the whole church – even the church to come.

What does He pray?

*"that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.  
May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

This is HUGE:

All the complexity of the pioneer prayer gets summarised into two key thoughts.

1. That they would experience unity with each other
2. That they would experience unity with the Trinity

Let's repeat that:

1. That they would experience unity with each other  
*"that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."*  
Because they're created in our Image:  
A Triune God where the Father is in the Son and in the Spirit....

2. That they would experience unity with the Trinity  
“May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”  
That they will truly encounter the “Us” of God.

So Jesus is praying that we will experience connection and love with our fellow Christians and with God.

And He goes on to say: “This unity of people isn’t hard.

You don’t have to like each other – they will find each other in Me - because I have unity with the Father.

And He goes on to say:

This unity will reveal God’s love to the world:

“May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

### **This has Implications**

1. Our Unity is not based on structure or resolution.  
It is based on the Triune One in who’s image we are created.  
This is our core-identity and purpose.  
The closer we get to our Triune God, the closer we get to each other.
2. Unity is not Uniformity:  
The Father, Son and Spirit are different.  
We reflect great diversity and unity is not found in disguising our differences.  
Paul hints at this when he talks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1Cor12.

1COR12:4-6

There are different kinds of **gifts**, but the same Spirit.

There are different kinds of **service**, but the same Lord. (*Kurios* - Jesus)

There are different kinds of **working**, but the same God (Father) works all of them in all

3. Unity convinces the world of the truth of the Gospel.  
John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

### **Conclusion**

Jesus was about to face the cross.

He was going to face separation from God the Father as He became the scapegoat separated from God for our sins.

In the light of His impending sacrifice, Jesus prays for the thing we need most:

That we embrace what it means to be created in the image of the Triune God and discover that:

1. We are made for connection to God and each other.
2. We find connection to each other:  
NOT  
- in finding common ground  
- in rules and regulations and enforced community  
BUT in connection with Jesus.
3. Only In and through our connection to God and each other will we meaningfully reach the world.

## **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> A Sharp Disagreement**

*Acts 15:36-40 Sometime later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.”<sup>37</sup> Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them,<sup>38</sup> but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.<sup>39</sup> They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,<sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.*

### **Introduction**

In Acts 15:36-41, we find Paul and Barnabas parting ways. The situation between Paul and Barnabas gets tricky because it involved a difference of opinion over a cousin of Barnabas. Barnabas wanted to take his cousin John Mark with him on a missionary journey with Paul. But Paul had a bad experience where John Mark left them on a previous journey, so Paul

is careful not to go through that again. He was also trying to set a boundary, of which he had a good reason for it. On the other hand, Barnabas wanted to keep his cousin with him and give him a second chance, which is understandable as well.

## **Body**

The situation was tense and verse 39 tells us that there was a charged emotional response from both sides.

However, this disagreement, which was ultimately a goodbye between Paul and Barnabas, did not mean that either of them was a bad person. Quite the opposite — they both had boundaries, and when they held to their boundaries, there was a need for separation.

When we look at how Luke, the author of the book of Acts, presents this disagreement, we cannot place a label of “right” or “wrong” on either of these two men. Both are commended, they both had reasons for the parting of ways that made sense, and they both acted out of personal conviction about the boundaries they needed to establish. This is such an important example to look at because both men loved the Lord, they both loved people ... and they both had the desire to do the right thing for God’s mission.

But still, they had to part ways.

Now, the end result is what I see as a major lesson for all of us: There’s no evidence that either of them bashed or slandered the other for the choice he made. And there’s no evidence that either of them tried to discredit the other in ministry.

As a result, their goodbye actually allowed the gospel to spread in two different directions and go even further than if they had stayed together.

Even though this was a goodbye between Paul, Barnabas and John Mark, it wasn’t the end of the story. Years later, when Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:11, he asked for John Mark to be brought to him because John Mark was “very useful to [Paul] for ministry” (ESV). Though they had experienced a rough time, they still had respect for each other and eventually reconciled.

For Paul to say John Mark was useful to him in ministry indicates to us that Paul now saw him in a different way. And he realises that John Mark is needed for them to reach their goal for the mission of God.

## **Conclusion**

There is beauty in good boundaries and goodbyes, when done appropriately, they give relationships the space for reconciliation. It might always be possible, but it is in some cases where boundaries and goodbyes help prevent destruction of a relationship.

With God’s help, even as we wrestle with disagreements or arguments we can find a way forward. I believe that Jesus is working in us as members of His church and that He is restoring us through it all. Reconciliation is possible, and so is redemption with God. So today, open your hands and surrender everything to Jesus. Release it to Jesus. The Moderator of the General Assembly the right Revd Lydia Neshangwe has challenged the church to revive the forgotten ministry of reconciliation for the unity of the church of Christ.

## **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Unity in Families**

### **Ephesians 5:21-6:4**

## **Background**

The family unit is an important part of the Christian Church, for God in His wisdom, chose to model the relationship within the family to the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church. The relationship of members of a Christian family should also mirror how members of the church should relate as members of one body.

## **Introduction to the Reading**

The letter to the church at Ephesus is more systematic and well laid out than most of Paul’s letters. The structure is very clear, with the first part of the letter focusing on our relationship to God in Christ, while the second part of the letter focuses more on our relationship to others in Christ. So the part that we focus on is concerned more about Christian behavior and relationships, and how we ought to have those relationships governed by Christ.

Our response to what God has done for us should be evidenced in how we relate to one another. If we are walking in the Spirit then virtues like humility, unity, maturity, love, charity, among others, should be part of our everyday life. This should be what guides family life and Christian relationships. Paul therefore encourages submission, sacrificial love, respect for others as well as unity if the family is to be a good model of the church in the world.

## Introduction to the Sermon

Paul argues that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, it will show by our mutual submission to each other; and that submission is done in the fear of God, not the fear of man. The idea of submission has to do with a God-appointed order. Even in the army if there are no levels of authority, confusion will reign supreme. Likewise the family setup would be marred by serious confusion and chaos without submission.

Submission has to do with being stripped of individuality so that one becomes a member of a unit or a team. This helps us as Christians in the home to always think of others, where there is submission, members are never self-seeking but have an attitude of being part of a bigger cohesive team.

## Motive for Submission

The motive for submission to one another should always be the fear of God. Submission should be driven by our respect for Jesus Christ, and our fear of disappointing Jesus Christ. It is a fear compatible with love.

Submission does not mean inferiority, but rather it is an acknowledgement that the Christian family has a role to obey and glorify God. Therefore where we glorify God the individual is not more important than the cohesion of the team or the unit. Submission is encouraged for the smooth cohesion and coordination of the team for the glorification of God.

## Headship

Headship has to do with authority and the appropriate responsibility to lead and also be accountable. As Jesus leads the church with authority, while also being accountable to God, so the husband has to be accountable to Christ for how he leads his family. The relationship of the husband and the wife is modeled on the union between Jesus Christ and the church. The family unit is therefore to be respected for it has far deeper implications in the plan of God.

As Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, so should the husband nourish and cherish his wife. The protection and provision of the wife is the responsibility of the husband.

## Sacrificial Love

Paul makes it clear that the family setup is a place of sacrificial love (agape). This is a love that is always giving without expecting anything in return; a love that loves even when it is rejected; a love that is never-ending. This is the love that grows families into Christian maturity, and a love that models after Jesus Christ's love for the church.

Children In the Family Unit

Children are the blessings that God has given to families. Children strengthen the Christian family unit when they are obedient to their parents. It is therefore important that the children are raised to fear the Lord and not to dishonor the family name. Parents have this responsibility to ensure the faith is taught in the home.

## Conclusion

Paul makes it clear that the home should be bound by love and members should be united, as the unity of the home points to the unity of the church as well as the submission of the church itself to Jesus Christ. The unity can be realized when we understand that our different roles do not make one inferior but it makes the unit cohesive and it is in the plan and wisdom of God. Let us therefore play our part in raising strong, united families that fear God.

## **SUNDAY 27 OCT: "Great Peacemakers"**

(1 Samuel 25:1-39; Matthew 5:9; James 3:18)

### Introduction

In a world of war and strife, we see that the world needs great peacemakers who want to see God's Kingdom a reality in communities and the world.

We began this week looking at a devotion on Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the Peacemakers" and have journeyed with the theme of peacemakers in "God's Word of Peace", "Seeking Peace", "Prince of Peace" and "Sowing Peace".

The Bible is full of great examples of peacemakers. Today we take time to reflect on "Great Peacemakers" in 1 Samuel 25:1-39, namely Samuel, David, The Servants and Abigail and see what we can learn from them, so that we can be great peacemakers in our communities.

### 1.2. Background to 1 Samuel 25:1-39



This is the period where David has been anointed king, but Saul is on the throne. Samuel, the great peacemaker, prophet and judge over Israel, dies. It is at this time that David arose, as God continues God's work in David in a remarkable way that sees Samuel's heritage live on.

This places David in danger from Saul, so David puts some distance between himself and Saul. David camps in the region of Carmel. There, David and his men have a good influence in the area. Their presence repels poachers and criminals and Nabal and other farmers in the area would have felt the benefit of their presence and protection of their flocks when raids were common.

David and his men are near the farm of a man named Nabal (which means "fool"). Nabal is wealthy in what he has, being thousands of goats and sheep. It's interesting that the passage mentions that Nabal is Calebite.

It is ironic for two reasons:

1. Nabal isn't loyal and faithful like Caleb the spy who went into the promised land with Joshua.
2. It means that Nabal is also from the tribe of Judah like David, but he rejects his tribesman.

### David's Request, Nabal's Insult and David's Fury

At shearing time David approaches Nabal with a request. "Please share some of your abundance with us", which is a reasonable request for what David had done so far:

Firstly – Because Nabal has benefited from David's presence, protection and humility; David calls his group Nabal's servants and he calls himself Nabal's son.

Secondly – Because in those times hospitality was prized and respected and it was considered an honour to be a host. Nabal's response is a direct insult to David and is terrifying in its ignorance and arrogance.

David is furious – a moment we have all no doubt found ourselves in and thoughts of peace-making have gone out the window.

David does not show Nabal the same kindness and longsuffering that he showed to Saul. In just the previous chapter, David spared Saul's life when Saul not only insulted David but also actually attacked him and tried to kill him.

David decides that Nabal must pay with his life and that of his family and servants, not one of the finest moments in David's life.

### The Servant Peacemakers

Thankfully the servants are wise.

They realise the danger.

They also realise that Nabal won't listen.

They go to Abigail.

It is clear they have a good relationship with her and that she trusts them and they her.

They speak so well of David and his men and they recognise the enormity of Nabal's insult.

This is often true of great peacemakers. Even when they don't have power – they can have influence. It's all about relationships and connections.

### Abigail the Peacemaker

There are many things we can learn from Abigail as a great peacemaker.

1. She acts quickly and generously – when there is great insult, a great apology should be made. Ironically, after all that she gives David, Nabal still feasts like a king – so there was always more than enough.
2. She acts humbly – she bows before David and apologises profusely, backing her words with actions.
3. She speaks wisely – she acknowledges Nabal's foolishness and she acknowledges David's men.
4. She sees the bigger picture – she knows that David has many enemies and that he is fighting for his life.
5. She also recognises that David is furious and gently but firmly warns David against vengeful bloodshed. Look at the wisdom of her words: "And now, my lord, as surely as the Lord your God lives and as you live, since the Lord has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal." (1 Samuel 25:26).
6. Then a bit later on she repeats the same idea: "When the Lord has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, my lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself." (1 Samuel 25:30-31).
7. She realises that David's anger is a bit like "the straw that broke the camel's back" and so she adds the line "may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal." What she is doing here is underlining the principle that "vengeance is the Lord's" and her words are prophetic, because Nabal will collapse and die the very next day (1 Samuel 25:38).

8. She speaks blessing and hope over David, basically calling David to be the best version of himself. She recognises that Saul is pursuing him and uses the image of a sling to remind David of his victory over Goliath. Look at her wise words: “Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.” (1 Samuel 25:29).

## David's Instant Response.

This simple gesture from a farmer's wife stops David in his tracks. David immediately realises that he was out of control and thanks God for sending Abigail. Again, we see that David is a great peacemaker at heart.

## Conclusion

We've acknowledged various great peacemakers in this passage

Samuel who kept peace by Spiritual Leadership and Influence

David who kept peace by being honourable (sparing Saul's life twice) and by distancing himself.

And was quick to realise he was out of control.

The Servants who used their insight and influence to good effect

Abigail who shows amazing peace-making skills.


We, likewise are called to be great peacemakers.

In a world where people are furious, divided, hurting and stressed.

In Matthew 5:9, Jesus says “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

In James 3:18, James says: “Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.” May we be great peacemakers so that we can be Stronger Together.


**Faith Clinic Bible Study**  
Topic  
*"Understanding the Psychology of Abuse: Identifying Patterns, Motivations, and Tactics of Abusers to Empower Survivors, Foster Resilience, and Break the Cycle of Perpetual Abuse"*



ON  
Thursday 03rd October  
2024  
@ 20 : 00hrs - 21 : 30hrs  
On Google meet

With Dr James Mwanza

**Faith Clinic Bible Study**  
Topic  
*"Understanding the world of the hurter in order to gain knowledge and wisdom to overcome perpetual abuse" Hosea 4:6.*



ON  
Thursday 19 September  
2024  
@ 20 : 00hrs - 21 : 30hrs  
On Google meet

With Rev. James Lungu



**Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe: Moderator of General Assembly**

## NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

### Acts 2:17 - 21

'In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.  
18 Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy...

21 And everyone who calls  
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

The theme of revival is burning like fire in my bones, and so I asked God to give me a word that would help me pass it on before it consumes me. God directed me to this very well-known passage where God promises, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people" and then goes on to outline which people in particular. Now, in the ancient biblical days the Spirit of

God was believed to be poured out only to a chosen, special, and select few.

So for Peter, on the day of Pentecost, to quote Joel's prophecy and claim or declare that the Spirit of God had now been poured out on "all people," including ordinary people, is bad. Especially the thought of the long-awaited Holy Spirit being poured out on uneducated common people who are gullible to any false teachings of the day. And worse, to have the Holy Spirit poured out on people outside of Jerusalem, the religious capital of the land!

What Peter is saying is scandalous, totally unacceptable, heretical sounding, and could cause someone to be stoned! Peter then goes on to outline exactly what types of people the Spirit is being given to.

### 1. That "sons and daughters will prophesy"!

This means children! Young people! The reputation that they have, both in those days and now, is that they are inexperienced, careless, dangerous. Even car insurance payments are higher in the young people age group because it is a proven fact that they are a risky age group for driving! How then can they be custodians of the Holy Spirit! How can God be so foolish about whom to pour out the Spirit on people that are still experimenting with life? Why not pour out the Spirit on the adults, the wiser, the qualified?

### 2. That "young men will see visions"!

Come on! The kind of visions that we know young men get is visions of things that I cannot even describe without causing a scandal in my sermon. Besides, there was an order of responsibility that was set in that middle eastern society - from baby to child to boy to Bar-mitzvah initiation at 12 years, to adult, and if chosen, to teacher of the law, or priest, to high priest. The Spirit was fit to be poured out upon the worthy like prophets, teachers, priests and high priests – those kinds of

people! Not young men who are known to be hot blooded and lacking in self-control.

### 3. That “old men will dream dreams”!

Honestly, what was God thinking? We all know that old people’s minds are a little slow, sometimes even a little senile. Their ideas are outdated; they don’t even know how to operate modern technologies properly and have to ask their grandchildren to help them operate their cell phones. All cultures of the world agree that we must treat old people well and with respect, but we must not trust them. We apply the hermeneutic of suspicion in all that they say. And we apply the hermeneutic of rolling our eyes when they talk about their dreams – if their memories allow them to even remember the dream! So how can God pour out his Spirit upon them and expect us to trust their dreams?

### 4. That “both men and women” will receive the Spirit!

What? Equalizing men and women in the things of God? Peter’s words are becoming worse by the minute. Everyone in the society knew that men and women were not equal in religion. Men worshipped God in the inner chamber of the temple; women were allowed only in the outer chamber because they were considered of an inferior species physically, mentally and spiritually. There was a hierarchy. How could the Holy Spirit ignore this hierarchy? How can the Holy Spirit forget that we need order? Doesn’t the Spirit know that this hierarchy needs to be respected?

SO WHY WOULD GOD POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT ON ALL THESE UNSPECIAL PEOPLE? If the Spirit is indeed poured out on ALL, then this is totally subversive both culturally and religiously – yet these are two of the three important pillars of society - culture, religion and law! It appears this Spirit is going to cause chaos, disorder and disruption!

And it’s even worse that this same Spirit of God will be ‘poured out’ - not a sprinkling or a spoonful, but the image of a pouring and therefore these unworthy ordinary people will be soaked in the Spirit. This means in abundance – not a trial-and-error sprinkling.

And for what purpose? So that “they will prophecy”! So that they will rise up and “receive power to be my witnesses” as Jesus told his disciples in his last words on earth. So that all people will prophesy and declare that “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (v.21). Instead of disorder, there will be freedom for all people and salvation for all when the Spirit of God reigns upon them. **NO ONE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND.**

**I want to speak to ALL OF YOU today with this message** – the Spirit of the Lord is upon you... God is up to something in this season... I challenge you to embrace God’s alternative visions and methodologies... Rise up and position yourselves for a revival from the Lord so that no one is left behind!

**I want to speak to the YOUNG PEOPLE among us...** Rise to life and share your visions that God gives you. We need them. Reject the man-made ideologies, values and practices that are going round. And instead rise up to God’s purposes upon your life and God’s revival. No one will be left behind!

**I want to speak to the OLDER PEOPLE among us...** As long as you’re still breathing, you’ve got work to do... Rise to life and share your dreams. You have the experience and the wisdom we need today. Our broken societies need to dream again... Rise up to God’s purposes and prophesy. So that no one will be left behind in God’s revival!

**I want to speak to the WOMEN...** The Holy Spirit does not choose based on whether you wear a skirt or a pair of trousers. The Spirit of the Lord is upon you! Rise up and re-create healthy communities. Rise to life and prophecy so that no one is left behind!



**I want to speak to the INFERIOR...** Who taught you that you are inferior? The Word of God says that you're made in the image of God... Resist the systems that deny you the fulfilment of God's purposes upon your life. Acknowledge and confess complicity in creating inferiority directly or indirectly. Moses was called to go and speak to Pharaoh and gave the excuse of his s-s-s-stammering., but God sent him anyway. So rise up and take your place for the Spirit of God is upon you. No one is left behind!

**I want to speak to the SINGLE PEOPLE** among us. People love to gossip about single people, but what you need to know is that the Spirit of God is upon you. Lydia was one such woman in Acts 16 and she did a great job of hosting the apostle Paul because she loved God. So rise up and stop crying that people are talking about you. Rise up and fulfil your God given purposes, so that no one is left behind!

**I want to speak to the LEADERS...** Because you have a big responsibility of being shakers and movers... Beware of modern-day distractions in your purpose... Beware of being a fancy cellphone but without the power... Rise up and and position yourselves for God's revival because the Spirit of the Lord is upon you. And you have the responsibility to prophesy so that no one is left behind!

**I want to speak to the UPCSA as a denomination...** The Spirit of the Lord is upon you. This year, the 25th anniversary of the UPCSA is an opportunity for a turning point for us as a church. It is our time for a revival. So rise up and position yourselves for this turning point moment, for this revival season, making sure that no one is left behind!

**I want to speak to us who live in Africa...** the centre of gravity of religion has shifted from the north and the west to the south – to Africa. This is no mistake – it is our opportunity as Africa to re-spread the gospel everywhere. This is our opportunity to teach the world a new AI, African Intelligence, which is our spirituality as Africans. So rise up, prophecy, spread the

gospel, and the importance of a healthy spirituality, so that no one is left behind!

To all of us, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you for a reason. So that:

- All can exercise prophetic witness not ideology tainted witness
- And prophetic preaching instead of dry conviction-less preaching
- And prophetic serving instead of selfishness
- And prophetic missiology instead of individualistic missions
- And prophetic theology and not mere academics
- And young people can pose prophetic questions and not just rebellious questions
- And adults can provide prophetic answers and not avoidance
- And leaders can exercise prophetic leadership and not ego-filled leadership

All because the Spirit of God is upon you!





# Denominational Conference Fellowship of Men

The Fellowship of Men in their Denominational Conference held in Pietermaritzburg on the 05th - 08th September 2024. Conference deliberated on a number of issues affecting men, including issues of health and welfare. A new leadership was elected consisting of Rev Nojoko as President, Deputised by Rev Nyawo. Bro Zukile Duma and Bro Karabo Molaba were elected as Secretary and Deputy Secretary respectively, while Bro Mkhusele Apleni was elected as Treasurer.











# Presbytery Of Highveld Fellowship of Youth

The Fellowship of Youth. Presbytery of Highveld held their Conference at the Trinity Congregation. They were welcomed by the Interim Moderator. Rev Njesa while the Moderator of Presbytery opened the event. The Youth are commended for donating a big banner to the Presbytery as a token of thank you. The UPCSA is indeed proud of its young people.











# LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

## Fellowship of Men

The Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Clr Mamedupi Teffo is here seen with the Fellowship of Men in Polokwane Congregation on the occasion of celebrating the role of men in our societies. Rev Dikobe Molaba hosted the event. We must keep on encouraging the Government leaders to take their seats in our churches.







# LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

## Kgapane Nuclear Congregation

As we come to the end of Heritage month in South Africa, several of our Congregations did this in style. Here, the Kgapane Nuclear Congregation in Limpopo Presbytery, celebrated their Heritage month on the 29 September 2024, showcasing the rich cultural heritage in our denomination. This is the beauty of creation, and we thank God for making our lives brighter every day. Big up to Kgapane.







# Synodical Conference

## Evangelical Presbyterian Church Men's Guild

The Deputy Secretary of the Fellowship of Men, Bro Thabo Karabo Molaba graced the 67th Synodical Conference of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Men's Guild on the 28th September 2024 at Malamulele, Limpopo. The Deputy Secretary was later joined by bro Benny Boshielo, who attended as both a member of the FoM and as General Secretary of the Pan African Presbyterian Men Fellowships. The brothers planted trees with the leadership of the EPCSA Men's Guild and the Moderator of General Assembly, The Right Rev GS Moyane. The FOM is steadfast in its drive forecumenism and church unity.







# Presbytery of Limpopo Education and Training Committee

On the 28th September 2024, the Education and Training Committee, Presbytery of Limpopo, hosted Eldership Training for 55 Elders. The training was conducted by Rev Armando Shumi Sontange. This was a training of trainers, where from each Congregation, the trainees consisted of the Minister and three Elders. We give thanks to this successful training.



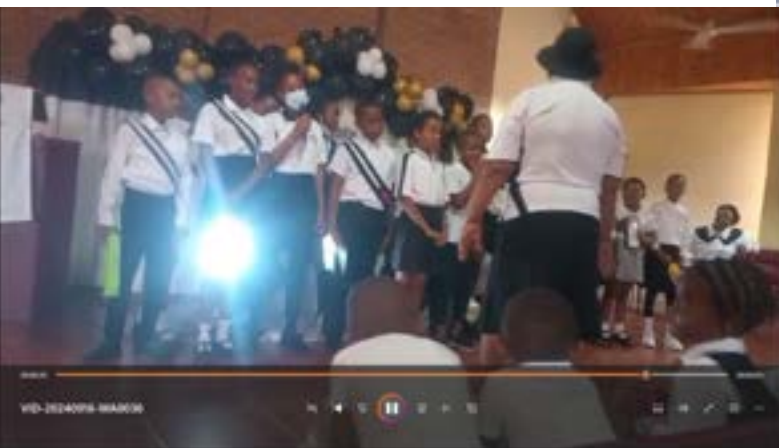




# Presbytery of Limpopo

## Stuartville Congregation Children Ministry

The Stuartville Congregation Children Ministry attended a Sunday School festival with other Denominations in Lebowakgomo, Presbytery of Limpopo. It was a day full of joy, entertainment and sharing for the children and their teachers. Hosted by URCSA, this is promising to be a never to miss event for children. Ensuring that our children grow up knowing their Creator.







# Presbytery of uThukela

## Celebrate their heritage & cultural diversity

As part of the Heritage month, the Presbytery of uThukela organised an event to celebrate their heritage and cultural diversity on Saturday, the 28th of September 2023. Ministers, Ministers spouses and the general membership of our church were in attendance. Yet again we see the beauty of God's creation. This is what the UPSCA talks about. When it talks about embracing our cultural diversity.







# Thukela Presbytery Fellowships

Spiritual Conference held 27-29 September











**My experience as a Probationer in PAT 2 –  
Synod of Zambia  
By Tuleleni Zondo**

When it was confirmed that PAT 2 was to be held in Zambia, all the fears and anxiety about leaving my country, South Africa, resurfaced. I have thought about travelling before but with Hlabelela being a part of my life, I told myself I would never leave her. The thought of leaving to another country stirred up mixed emotions. I did not know what to expect. As the day of departure drew closer though, I started to be excited and I was comforted by the fact that I will not be alone but will be travelling with my fellow Probationers.

We arrived on a Sunday afternoon and as soon as we exited the airport, there were people who came to fetch us. We went straight to Kabwata Presbyterian Church where we were warmly welcomed by the Synod Moderator, Rev. Sauros Phaika, other Ministers and the members of the congregation. At this time, it was just us and all the people we met for the first time. I admired how everyone made us feel welcomed and appreciated.

What I have learned about Zambian people and their culture is that they operate on “Zambian Time”. Everyone is calm, not in a rush, cool and always ready to assist but at their own time, but rest assured, whatever you would like them to do, it will be done. Zambia basically has many businesses that we, South Africans have and I did not have trouble finding what I was looking for when we were granted a pass. Everywhere you turn, you will find a Bureau de Change, so it was not very long and I was in possession of Kwacha and I never enjoyed shopping like I did when we went to the market. I wanted a piece of Zambia with me to take home.

As we were going to the motuary and crematorium, I was disheartened to see school-

aged children, at a time when they were supposed to be at school, sifting through recycling material and when I asked about this, I was told that some were street kids with different reasons why they were there. I immediately thought of the cycle of poverty that will never end and the potential long-term impact of lack of education could have on the future of children and youth in Zambia. I wondered what the government is doing about this situation and this is still concerning to me. What also amazed me is that there are more than 90 different languages spoken in Zambia but I got to hear Tumbuka and Bemba mostly as the people in Lusaka spoke those languages. The worship service at Chilenje Presbyterian Congregation where I was assigned was phenomenal as I got to sing hymns in Tumbuka.

The tune and melody was familiar and looking at the hymn book made it easy for me to sing along and that made me feel part of the worship service. The resident minister is Rev. Panji Nkhosi. The order of service was a little different from what I am used to. I am humbled and honored by the hospitality I received from the members of this congregation. Hopefully the bond that was formed this day will never break as we exchanged contact details.

The training program itself was empowering, inspiring and challenging at times as some presentations challenged me to get out of my comfort zone and be vulnerable. We interrogated the theme of a Transnational Church; its complexities, implications and what role can we play to achieve an understanding of what it means for the Church.

All the presentations were thought provoking but if I were to highlight one that stood out for me is “Transnational Church and its Implications by Rev Sauros Phaika, where I got to reflect on the vows I will be making during ordination. It made me to really think about my inner convictions and what I will be entering into. I have gained a deeper understanding of my Church, its polity and processes. There were



presentations for personal growth. Through some presentations I gained tools so I could make a meaningful difference in the congregation I will be serving at. . I was inspired, empowered and equipped. There was not a single day I felt unsafe or in danger throughout our stay. The journey has begun and I am so honored that God has presented this opportunity for me to experience this.















# Presbytery of Zimbabwe

St Peter's UPCSA, Gweru, 6-8 September 2024 - The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa's (UPCSA), Presbytery of Zimbabwe Fellowship of Men recently convened its national conference under the theme "Come, let us build" (Nehemiah 2 vs 17). The elective conference aimed to revitalize the fellowship and rebuild its foundations.

Keynote speaker Rev Mutonganawo (standing in for the Moderator) emphasized the need for professional leadership in rebuilding the fellowship, likening it to constructing a fallen wall. "Second-hand bricks" representing individuals with diverse experiences and perspectives require skilled hands to integrate into a cohesive structure.

The conference saw the election of new skilled builders in the form of a National (Presbytery of Zimbabwe) Executive Committee:

President: Mr. Partson Samu

Vice President: Mr. Bekezela Mithi

Secretary: Mr Beza Zulu

Vice Secretary: Mr. Wilfred Chirwa

Treasurer: Mr. Thomas Nyagwaya

Attendees praised the conference for providing a platform for reconnecting after a prolonged period without gathering. The impressive turnout reflected the enthusiasm for rebuilding and revitalizing the fellowship.

In the words of a delegate, "We thank God for calling us together and encouraging us to 'Come and rebuild' the fallen walls." This was a call that came at the right time. A time we are reminded again that a wall is as strong as its members are cemented together, "Stronger together".

The UPCSA (Presbytery of Zimbabwe) Fellowship of Men's renewed commitment to rebuilding and growth is poised to have a lasting impact on the church and its community.





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