

THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

U.P.C.S.A.

Presbyterian Link

2025 MARCH

Edition

Linking All Presbyterians together

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**Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe:
Moderator**

Dear friends,

The story is told of two friends who were hanging out together - a newly moulded clay pot named Clay and a newly made wax candle named Wax. The sun came out and greeted them with a big smile and said, "May I hang out with you?" Clay and Wax said, "Sure, you can join us."

The sun joyfully joined them. The sun's heat rose and rose to its highest temperatures for the day. As a result, Clay began to harden, and Wax began to melt. The clay hardened and hardened, and became stronger and stronger. The wax melted and melted. It lost its shape and began to fall apart. It became a hot and formless liquid. It stopped being a candle that gave light. It lost its function; it lost its purpose.

The same heat that hardened the clay, melted the wax - same heat but different results. Because of what the item was made from. Now in this life we as believers face heat left right and centre. Relational heat,

economic heat, cultural heat, legal heat, political trouble or even spiritual dips.

The question is what are you made of? Are you made of faith and trust in God so that trouble makes you stronger? Or are you made of fear and doubt and poor self-esteem so that trouble melts you and makes you fall apart? You suddenly forget who you are in Christ. The heat makes you lose your identity. And you lose your God given purpose. You forget the vision that God has given you. You forget the role that only you can play because there is only one you.

Jesus said something that is true for everyone: "In this world you WILL have trouble." Jesus did not say you "might" or "may" or "possibly" or "could" have trouble. It is definite - you "will" have trouble, because we live in a fallen world. This means when you experience trouble, hardship or suffering, this is nothing unusual or uncommon or surprising. Even if you are Christian, you will find yourself blindsided, betrayed, treated unfairly, or suffer the consequences of your bad choices. Jesus is saying expect trouble because trouble is common to all.

But Jesus doesn't leave it there. He goes on to say, "But take heart, I have overcome the world." In other words, do not melt under the heat as if you have no faith. Do not fall apart under the heat as if you do not have Jesus. Do not suddenly forget your identity or your purpose because of suffering. Be like the clay. It feels the heat yes, but it is perfected by the heat. May we, as we face situations of heat, allow God to perfect us and make us usable for kingdom purposes in our churches and in the society where God has placed us



Elder Benny Boshelo:
Convener - Communications Committee

Editorial

The month of April is here with us. It is a month in which Christians all over the world are reflecting on their faith and most importantly their relationship with Christ. It is therefore in many ways a month of reflection. But it is also a month of celebration full of Grace and Love as we reflect on the last days of Jesus Christ on this earth.

From Ash Wednesday, through to Lent and Palm Sunday, leading up to the Maundy Thursday and then Easter, Presbyterians were seen in a deep reflection and spiritual revival. Without compromise, many rekindled on their relationship with Christ. The Presbyterian Link team is happy to see that indeed our Congregations and Congregants does not miss any moment to celebrate these moments.

This issue of Presbyterian Link will showcase several things. Starting with an Easter message from the General Secretary of the Church, Rev, Dr George Machinkowsky and the reflections of the

Moderator of General Assembly, The Right, Rev Lydia Neshangwe, the edition will also carry all the actions from the rededication services across the Denomination. While these Rededication services are a brainchild of the Fellowship of Women, we have seen that in some many Congregations, this is now done by all the Fellowships together. This is a welcome development in that it removes our Fellowships from worshipping in silos. However, this must not be a once off thing as it adds to the spiritual life of our Congregations.

The issue also makes some reflection on our preparations with the General Assembly. This on the heels of a very informative meeting where the General Secretary and his team came to brief all the Conveners of Committees of general Assembly and coach them about several important matters like preparing and submission of reports, how to structure the proposals and how to present the reports. This was indeed a welcome develop.

In the next three months the Communications Committee will be running snippets on the Presbyterian Link and other of our platforms to give heads-up as we approach the Assembly. This to ensure that our members are well informed about what the upper and decision structures deliberate and take very important decisions which affects all of us. These snippets will run on a weekly basis to keep us all alert and pray for our church.

The Moderator-designate has a theme 'Partners in Mission', this is a very powerful theme which well understood, will propel our church to success. This General Assembly will take our church to another level. We wish all the delegates well as they prepare for this important gathering of our church leaders. Ours is to ceaselessly pray for them, that when our Moderator takes

over the leadership of our church, he can do so with new power, energy, and more wisdom.

All the best to all the Commissioners as we commend them to the Lord.



Rev, Dr George Marchinkowski:
General Secretary

GENERAL SECRETARY'S COLUMN

As we approach Easter, the high point of the Christian calendar, I am reminded that it is at the same time the anniversary of an event that created our faith and at the same time the core of what unites us. The death and resurrection of Jesus created the Christian faith. The new believers gradually parted ways with the communities of Synagogue and Temple as they gathered together in homes. Acts 2: 42-47 describes the phenomenon like this:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled

with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and almost everyone else cleaves to this story about how our faith was born. We have these life changing events in common. This year we also celebrate a later event, the Council of Nicaea, which took place in May 325. It produced a Creed that expresses the faith of a united Church. What is even more wonderful is that the Churches in the Eastern Orthodox tradition (who follow the Julian calendar) and Churches in the West (Protestant and Catholic) will celebrate Easter on the same day this year – 20 April! This is a rare occasion. 2025 raises the bar even further for us in that the Jewish Passover falls over our Holy week (12 – 20 April)! Can you believe it?

These moments of synchronicity are worth celebrating. They deepen our awareness of God and neighbour who are to be the focus of our love. Let's truly experience this Easter as a call to be one – as Jesus so fervently prayed in John 17.



The Community of Churches

The UPCSA participated in the Council for World Mission's Africa Region meeting from 18 to 21 March 2025 in Blantyre, Malawi. The delegation consisted of the General Secretary, the Rev Richard Mkandawire (representing M&D) (Zambia), Ms Netsai Pamela Timoti (Zimbabwe) and Ms Ntomboxolo Pennington (South Africa). Our own Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, who is attached to the Zomba Theological University led the morning Bible Studies, concentrating on prophetic passages of Esther 3 & 4, Judges 4 and Genesis 4 calling for bold interaction with the empires experienced in daily life. We are called to be messengers of Kingdom values in the neighbourhoods God has placed us. The contrast between the kingdom of God with its invitation to live in life affirming ways and the world around us which divides people and entrenches a violent survival of the fittest worldview is staggering and yet Christians can be carriers of Good news for all the people.

We reflected on the UPCSA and how we could jump start programmes aimed at sustainability, hope, nurturing earth, encouraging women leadership and peacemaking. Keynote addresses were

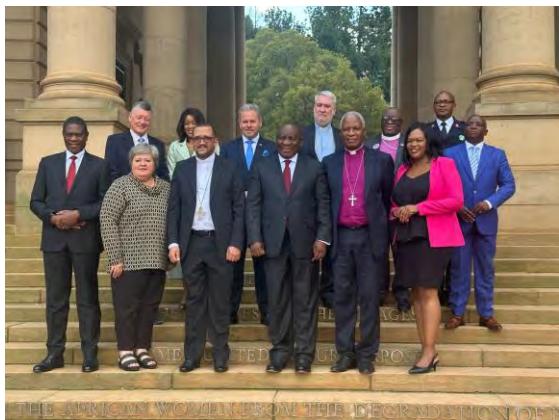
given by CWM General Secretary Jooseop Keum, Scots/Malawian academic Kenneth Ross and academics Thandi Gumedze and Teddy Sakupapa. Good discussion was had and ideas were planted for further missional engagement.



A Pastoral visit to Dr Mpetsheni

Since the CWM Members Mission Forum was held in Blantyre, I took the opportunity to visit with Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, former General Secretary and currently Partner in Mission which is teaching at Zomba Theological University. Dr Mpetsheni and I spent a day together, discussing UPCSA matters and I was able to enquire after his health and wellbeing in his new position. The Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor of Zomba Theological university showed me around Zomba and we enjoyed a lovely lunch together at a local restaurant.

Continue to pray for Dr Mpetsheni in his important work of lecturing and especially as he leads the inaugural MTh in Missional Studies offered there in partnership with CWM.

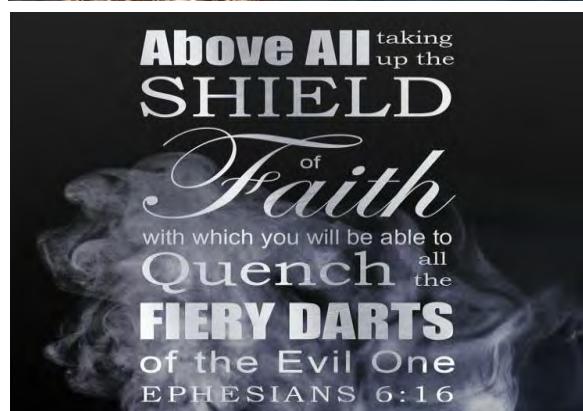


A VISIT TO THE UNION BUILDINGS

A last item that deserves mention here, though, is that I participated in the National (South African) Church Leaders Meeting held virtually on 3 April 2025 and was subsequently invited to join a delegation of Church leaders (Bishops, Moderators and General Secretaries) which met with the State President, the Deputy President and various Ministers of Cabinet) on Friday 11 April 2025 at the Union Buildings in Tshwane.

Various matters ranging from crime to corruption, the G20 meeting later this year and the promised "National Dialogue" was discussed. I addressed the President and Cabinet (on behalf of all the Churches) on the challenges and concerns experienced by the Church in dealing with the Department of Home Affairs. Many of our ministers have not been registered as Marriage Officers although they have fulfilled all the requirements. Some Marriage Officers have tried to have their files transferred when they have moved without success and many report peculiar and outlandish rules they have to follow in registering a marriage. Many of these "rules" are not applied in other Home Affairs offices. I called upon the President

(and the Director General of Home Affairs) to collaborate with the Churches to find understanding, co-operation and efficiency. I also raised the problems transnational churches face to facilitate visas and work permits for ministers who are called and appointed to a country other than their home.





You can feel the energy in the room when Children's Ministry Leaders get together!

We certainly felt it on the 1st of March when almost 50 Sunday School Teachers from 17 different congregations got together in the Presbytery of Tshwane.

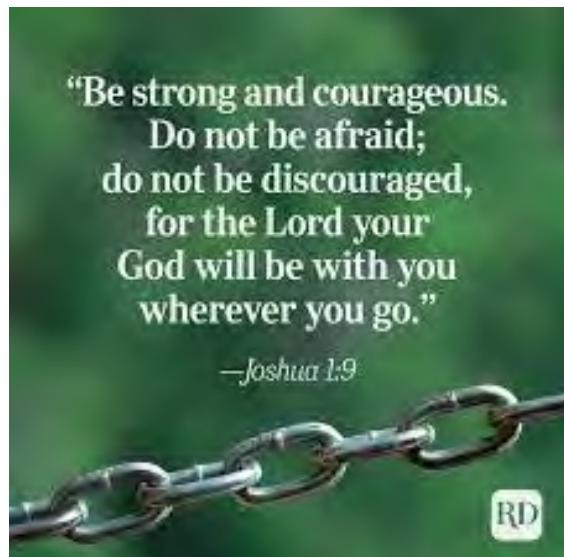
We enjoyed a time of fellowship and training and encouragement. We spoke about many aspects of children's ministry, focusing on age appropriate ways to teach Bible lessons and to help young people grow in their relationship with Jesus.

It was such a blessing to be able to share ideas and to feel the sense of teamwork as we all realised we're not alone in our passion to teach God's truths to the kids and teens in our Presbytery.

We have plans for ongoing communication amongst the POT Children's Ministry teams. We have a curriculum that is free and easy to share on WhatsApp. And we're planning some singing events for the children in our

Presbytery, so that they can also see we are part of something much bigger than just our local congregations.

We're excited about what God will do with the energy we share as the Children's Ministry Leaders in our Presbytery serve and teach His children this year!





THE UNITING
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IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

E.N BONO FELLOWSHIP OF MEN

PRESENTS
MJIKELO FOR 2025



Amathole Presbytery

LOCATION : RZ NOTSHE OUTSTATION
TIME: 12H00
DATE: 06/04/2025







Amathole Presbytery

Probationer Post Academic Training Opening; And Licensing Service OF Mr Odwa Mhlontlo And Miss Chwayita Vaaiboom; And Ordination Of Miss Bamanye Vokwana





Central Cape Presbytery

The Central Cape Presbytery FOY led by President Iviwe Makanya had a successful night of the stars Mate Gala, held at the prestigious Nelson Mandela Metro Feather Market Hall on the 23rd of November 2024. Our youth members and other attendees were appropriately attired for the occasion. Bro Mbasu Gqokoma from Amathole Presbytery welcomed our attendees exceptionally well at the red carpet giving an ambiance atmosphere. The event was a night to remember, elegance from drinks on reception seated dinner and an amazing entertainment performance of a life band by Busi Johnson. Keynote address by a guest speaker.

Our M.C. Mr Lizo Mente, who energised the audience and ensured that our guests leave with a sense of excitement and satisfaction. We also had an Awards Ceremony for Most Active Congregation: M. Makwetu Memorial Congregation, Best Dressed in Uniform Female: Str Nozuko Putini, Best Dressed in Uniform Male: Bro Libongo Njikelana both from D.M. Soga Memorial Congregation. Best Dressed for the night Males: Bro Langa Khumalo and Female was Str Sinemihlali Vuba who was our guest from MCSA Wesley Guild.

Special thanks to our organizers who made it happen despite the odds, our Vice President Str Luyolo Madasi and Str Zodwa Gilivane.





NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

WELCOME TO THE
ORDINATION SERVICE
of



Bamanye Vokwana

Mr
Odwa Mhlontlo



Ms.
Chwayita Vaaiboom

AMATHOLE PRESBYTERY

Presents Licensing SERVICE OF

MR ODWA MHLONTLO

&

MS CHWAYITA VAAIBOOM



9 March 2025

12:30

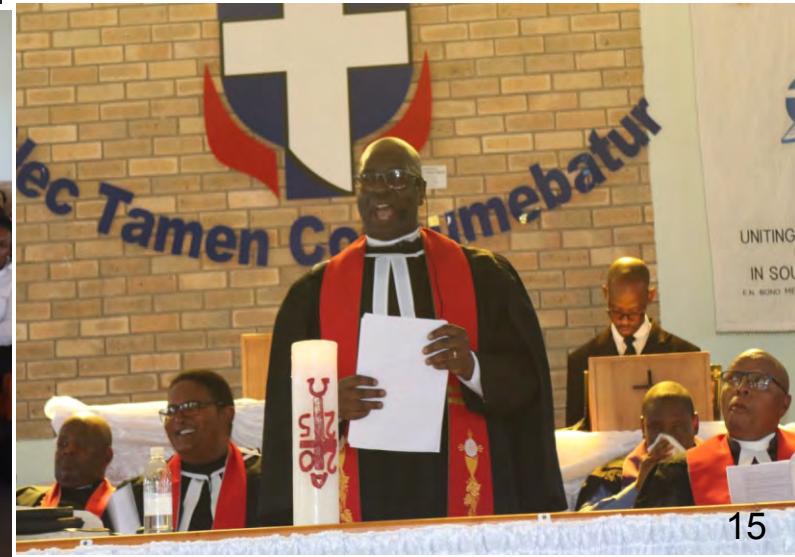


EN Bono Memorial
Congregation,
East London

For enquiries: Elder Siya Mqalo
Presbytery Clerck: 0781779559









Highveld Presbytery

The General Secretary was inducted into office on the 9th February at Gateway Presbyterian Church within Highveld Presbytery. The Moderator Designate Rev Dr Amon Kasambala delivered the charges. The previous Moderators of the UPCSA, Rev Professor Duncan and the Rev Prof Maake Masango did the prayers for the Marchinkowski family as well as the prayers for the whole Church. Among the congregation were also the Ecumenical partners, ministers and elders from the Presbyteries of Lekoa, Tshwane, Highveld and Egoli as well as members of the UPCSA.





Limpopo Presbytery

The Rededication Service of the Fellowship of Youth and the Fellowship of Young Women at the Polokwane Congregation located in the Presbytery of Limpopo, which took place on Sunday, 23rd of March 2025 under the theme "Renewed minds centered on God's will" extracted from the book of Colossians 1:9-10





Limpopo Presbytery

Welcoming of new members at Mt Horeb Congregation in the bounds of the Presbytery of Limpopo on the 2nd of March 2025.





Limpopo Presbytery

The Fellowship of Women Rededication service held on the 09th March 2025 at Mt Moreb Congregation





Limpopo Presbytery

Rededication service of the Fellowship of Wome and induction of executive committee members of Fellowship of Men of the Stuartville Congregation in the bounds of the Presbytery of Limpopo





Limpopo Presbytery

Rededication service of the Fellowship of Women at the Donhill Congregation held on the 09th March 2025, in the bounds of the Presbytery of Limpopo.





Limpopo Presbytery

The Ga-Kgapane Nuclear Congregation Fellowship of Women had a wonderful day on their date of their rededication. The women were also joined by the Fellowship of Men in the rededication service. The service was also used to induct the Executive Committee which was elected in on the 15th of December 2025. The GaKgapane Congregation is under the guidance of Rev Khonani Maselesele and Elder Benny Boshielo.





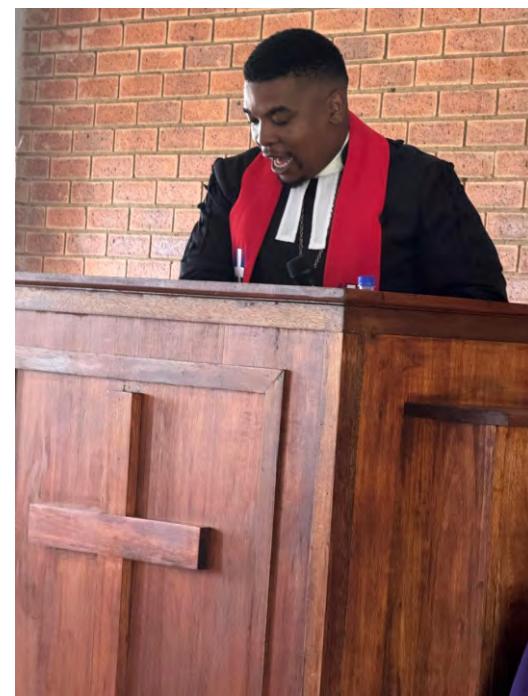


Limpopo Presbytery

Stuartville Congregation under the leadership of Rev Lethabo Mabotja held a rededication service for all the Fellowships at its Maja Outstation.

The event was blessed by the presence of Rev Esau Pandelani and MaMoruti Pandelani from Blaauwberg Congregation. The service was also used to induct the newly elected Executive Committee of the Fellowship of Men in the Congregation. Re a ba lebogisha.



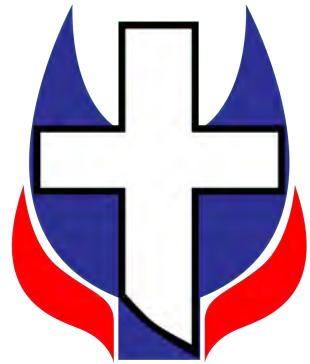




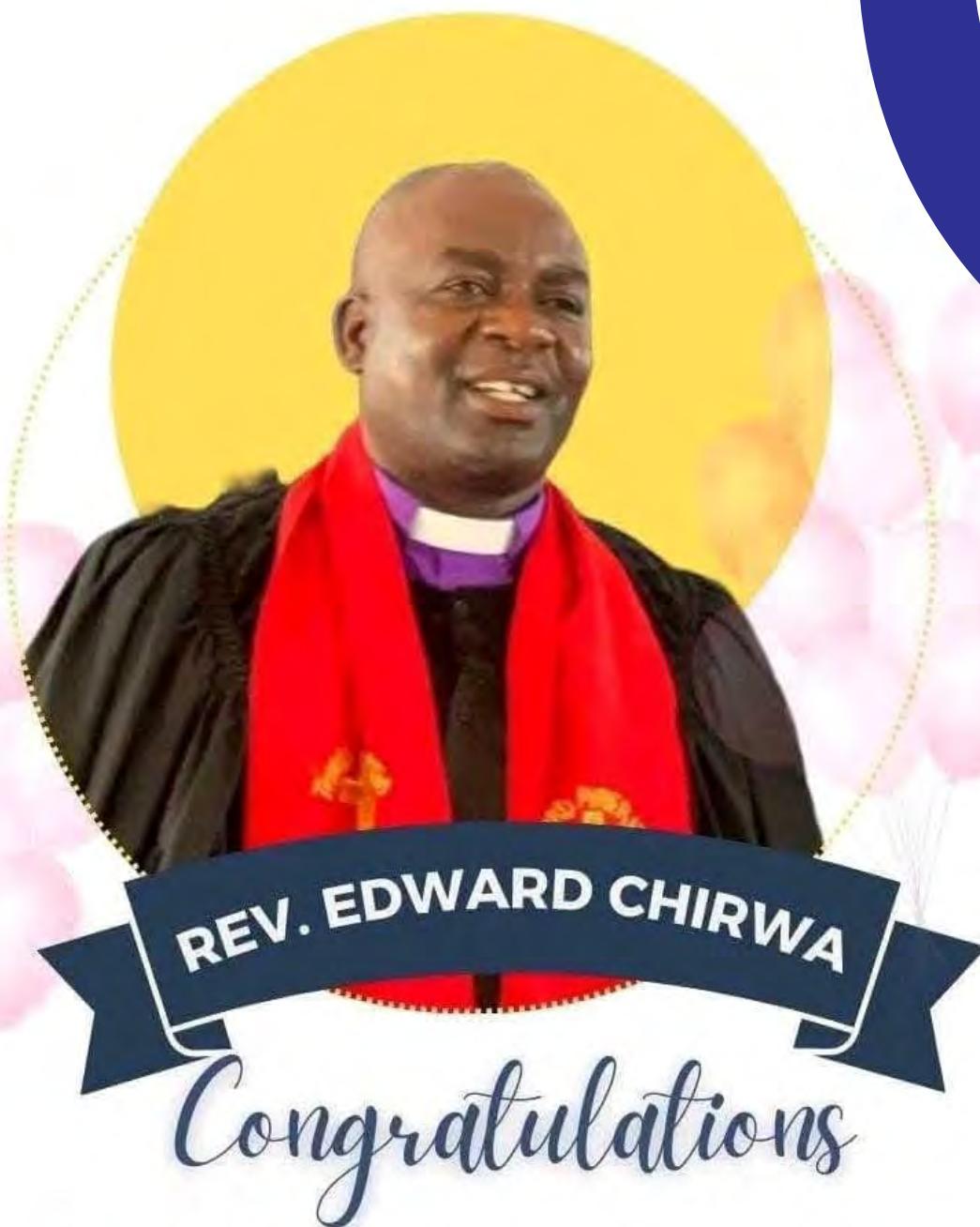
Tshwane Presbytery

Rededication service of the FOW and FOYW at St Andrews, Pretoria Congregation held on the 09th March 2025, in the bounds of the Presbytery of Tshwane.





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REV. EDWARD CHIRWA

Congratulations

Moderator Designate of the Synod of Zambia
UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ZAMBIA



KABWATA
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



P R E S E N T S

INDUCTION Service

IN HONOUR OF

THE REV. JAMES LUNGU
as Minister-In-Charge of Kabwata Presbyterian Church

VENUE

CHURCH
AUDITORIUM



09:00 HRS
PROMPT

6TH APRIL, 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION
0977 798 248

Your Presence Is Highly Anticipated

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

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.

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