



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

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From the Desk of Your Partner in Mission (PIM)

The Moderator of General Assembly

Dear Partners in Mission,

I greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This pastoral letter comes as the first of many you will be receiving from me. As we already observed at the General Assembly – partners communicate with each other, they support one another and are always there for each other in season and out of season. And that is what makes partnership a unique embodiment of strong relationships and family.

A Marathon Race After General Assembly 2025

I do not know about you; as for me, immediately after the General Assembly in Mthatha (Jun 29th – July 4th), a new marathon journey and race started. This marathon has already taken me to Kimberley (10th–13th July) where I had to do the opening and closing services of the fellowship of youth (FOW) conference hosted by the Trans Xhariep Presbytery. What a wonderful and impactful time we had with the Youth, shaping a new vision for the future leadership of the UPCSA (and for your information, that future starts today).

The marathon further took me to Lusaka, Zambia (23rd–24th July) to attend the Lead Africa Summit – a transformative leadership forum of high-profile leaders from the church, government, business and non-governmental organizations in Africa. A Summit that wrestled with the question, “*How can we change the narrative of African leadership into something that gives life and transforms the way we do things on the continent?*” The Summit was officiated by the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia.

The marathon then took me to Muldersdrift, a farming area outside Johannesburg (7th–10th Aug) – there, at the Good News Convention Centre, gathered a huge number of the fellowship of women (FOW) for their annual general conference hosted by eGoli Presbytery. I was invited to do the opening and closing services and officiate the elections of new denomination executive leaders of the FOW. What a moment it was to worship with the mothers (and the fathers, youth and young women who joined us at the two services). It felt uplifting to see the church come alive at the FOW conference. The presence of ministers and elders was such a blessing to all of us.

Decisions of the General Assembly

While on this marathon, my mind was taken back to some solemn and sacred moments we experienced at the General Assembly in Mthatha when GA commissioners had to wrestle with real issues confronting the UPCSA. I was humbled to observe that amidst different opinions and robust debate on issues (that is what Presbyterians do), commissioners allowed moments of discernment and listening to what the Spirit of the Lord was whispering into their spirits. It was within the context of solemnity and robust debate that decisions of the General Assembly were arrived at. I am bringing this picture to your attention so that when you are presented with the decisions taken at the General Assembly 2025, you should always bear in mind that some decisions were not easy to arrive at hence the reason for providing a process roadmap for further engagement to take place at different levels of our denominational structures. Decisions around the following reports and debates were not easy to take:

- Ethics and Discipline Committee (see why the Task Team was appointed)
- Church Fellowships Committee (see what was referred for further consultation with Fellowships)
- Doctrine Committee (see what was referred to the Task Team)
- Ministry Committee (see what was decided around placement of probationers)

My prayer is that you will read the decisions of the General Assembly, which have just been circulated to your Presbyteries, considering the picture I have given you above. You will resist the temptation to read into the decisions something that was not discussed nor part of the debate. You will resist the temptation to spread falsehood. The best you could do as a responsible UPCSA Christian is to seek guidance from all the ministers and elders (and not just one individual) who represented you at the General Assembly to help you understand how some decisions were arrived at. And in all this, please continue to pray for the Church.

I am reminded of a statement that was made at a recent meeting of the Church Unity Commission (CUC) which observed that issues around human sexuality, gender equality are issues that almost every member of CUC is facing currently.

What is the next marathon?

The next marathon(s) will take us to Limpopo – where the fellowship of men will be meeting at their annual general conference then to Synod of Zambia in Lusaka, Tiyo Soga Presbytery, the fellowship of young women, and fellowship of church choirs & musicians. More on this in the next pastoral letters. Please keep me company on these marathons through your prayers.

Expression of Gratitude

Once again, our expressions of gratitude go to the **Synod of JH Soga and Mthatha Presbytery** for hosting a successful General Assembly 2025. We continue to praise the Lord for all the work accomplished.

And to the reader, may you please continue to serve the Lord with passion and commitment. *“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him”* (Colossians 3:17).

Your Partner in Mission (PIM)

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