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IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

UPCSA

Presbyterian Link

2026 EDITION

February

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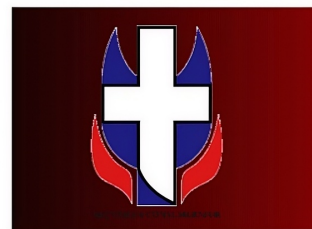


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UPCSA PASTORAL LETTER

MARCH, 2026

<https://unitingpresbyterian.org/>



The Rt. Rev Dr Amon Kasambala
Moderator, General Assembly

GRATITUDE, MARATHON RACE AND CELEBRATING LENT

IN FOCUS

Gratitude: Thanksgiving for Faithful Giving and Renewed Support for the Mission of the Church

A Marathon Race: Reflections on a Demanding but Fruitful Journey of Ministry Across the Church

Celebrating Lent: A Call to Reflection, Repentance, and Spiritual Renewal as the Church Prepares for Easter

GRATITUDE

It gives me great joy to share that since my last communication encouraging all congregations and Presbyteries of the UPCSA to support the denomination financially, there has been a very encouraging response from several of our congregations.

For some time now, we have been living with a significant financial deficit in the UPCSA budget, a challenge that has persisted since the COVID-19 pandemic. It is truly remarkable to see how, over the past four months, what once seemed like a very large mountain of deficit has already been reduced by nearly half as congregations have begun responding with their ministry contributions.

I would therefore like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have taken up this challenge, as well as to those who are still coming on board to ensure that the UPCSA is fully supported financially so that it can faithfully carry out its ministry and mission mandate.

Please do not grow weary in your giving. Let us continue to rally around our denomination and strengthen it as a beacon of hope for ministry and mission. Through your giving, you demonstrate true partnership in the work of the Gospel. I encourage you once again to reflect on Philippians 1:3–6 as a reminder of our shared calling and commitment. Thank you for responding so generously to this humble appeal.

A Marathon Race

The year began at a very fast pace, almost like a marathon. At the invitation of the Central Cape Presbytery, on 10–11 January 2026, I travelled to Grahamstown for the renaming and dedication of Makanaskop, which has now become the ET Magula Memorial Presbyterian Church. On 18 January 2026, I had the privilege of preaching and participating in a well-attended covenant service for the community congregations of the eThekweni Presbytery.



From 18–23 February 2026, the General Secretary, George Marchinkowski, and I travelled to Zimbabwe to undertake several engagements as part of our transnational mandate in the UPCSA. During this visit we:

- Visited the life-changing community outreach project at St Columba's Presbyterian Church in Mutare, known as the "Called to Care" project.
- Attended the Presbytery of Zimbabwe meeting in Bulawayo.
- Officiated at the dedication and unveiling of the plaque for the newly built church sanctuary at Mufakose Presbyterian Church in Harare.
- Met with Zimbabwean ministers at City Presbyterian Church in Harare, where we shared together about the many challenges of ministry and encouraged one another to remain faithful to God's call.

As you can imagine, the Zimbabwe visit truly became a road marathon. To give an idea of the journey: on 18 February we drove from Harare to Mutare for about 3½ hours. On 20 February we travelled from Mutare to Bulawayo, a drive of nearly 8½ hours. Then on 21 February we returned from Bulawayo to Harare, another journey of almost 7½ hours. After all those long hours on the road, only two words came to mind: a marathon trip.

On 28 February, at the invitation of the leaders of the eGoli Presbytery Church Fellowships, I facilitated a workshop on church governance structures and on the role of fellowships within the congregation and the denomination at large. The following day, Sunday 1 March, we gathered for a well-attended dedication and Holy Communion service.

CELEBRATING LENT

We have now entered the season of Lent—and at the time of writing, we have already passed three Sundays within this sacred period. From both a historical and ecclesiastical perspective, Lent is a significant season in the Christian calendar that prepares believers for the celebration of the resurrection of Christ at Easter. It is a time marked by deep reflection, prayer, repentance, and spiritual renewal. This season calls all who believe in Christ to return to God, to examine their lives, and to renew their commitment to following Christ. It is also a time when the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa should prayerfully ask:

- What must die in us as a Church so that Christ may truly live in us?
 - What must we surrender so that we may experience the power of resurrection life?
- Lent is not merely about giving something up; rather, it is about creating space for God in every area of our lives—our personal lives, our families, our businesses, our careers, and in everything else we hold dear.

May this season between now and Easter become a deeply refreshing spiritual journey for you—one that strengthens and empowers you to be a more determined, focused, and committed partner in the mission of Christ and His Kingdom. The marathon race continues. More updates will follow in the next communication.

Your Partner in Mission (PIM)
Rt. Rev Dr Amon Kasambala
Moderator, General Assembly



PARTNERS IN MISSION

Editorial

Once more, we bring you greetings from the Communications Committee and Presbyterian Link Team. We have just traversed through the second month of the year 2026 and yet our Denomination is already abuzz with plenty of activities. These speaks of a Denomination which is hard at work, and our team holds the responsibility to ensure that you, the beautiful Presbyterians, are informed about these activities and programs.

In the month of February, we have seen the Moderator of General Assembly, The Rt, Rev Dr Amon Kasambala and our General Secretary, Rev Dr George Marchinkowsky, paid a weeklong visit to the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. Through our social media platforms, we captured all the places they visited, the people they met and the activities they engaged in and with.

They met young and old people, women and men and very importantly, visited many projects which our church is involved in. As if that was not enough, they were back in South Africa and continued to hit the ground running. These are activities of two Office Bearers, and there are many more. General Assembly Committees were also hard at work, with both educative



Benny Boshielo
Convener: Communications Committee

and mission work. Through online platforms, we saw amongst others the Health and Wellness Committee and the Ministry Committee initiating programs which sought to educate our members and church leadership about matters which are at the heart of our work as Presbyterians.

Teaching has indeed taken the front seat in ensuring that our members not only become better Presbyterians, but most importantly, better Christians. Of course, other Committees were equally involved in this work.

We have also in this period celebrated the retirement of two of our Ministers, who have served our church and God, not only with distinction, but par excellence with unmeasured sacrifices and commitment. The retirement celebration service for Rev Jane Moyo Nyirongo was held at Garden Presbyterian Church while the one for Rev Mukondoleli Ramulondi was held at Makwarela Congregation. Both services were well attended by people from within and outside the UPCSA. As these servants of God take the well break from active Ministry, we wish them well. Once more, our sincere congratulations to these servants of God.

On a sad note, while we celebrate these successes and hard work of these fellow Presbyterians to the Glory of God, we are saddened by the conflict taking place in the Middle East. The attack on the Republic of Iran by Israel and the United States, cannot in anyway be condoned by any Christians. In Jesus Christ, we saw acts of love and compassion. We were taught about the secrets of life which held on to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Similarly, by these acts of compassion, we were encouraged and called upon to emulate Christ in our actions. We were taught to love, to care, to be the bearers of life and not death, and importantly to be Christlike in our conduct. The war in the Middle East is a negation of all these things. It is about earthly things which destroys the very foundation of the lessons taught to us by Christ. The Communications Committee and the Presbyterian Link Team invite all and sundry to pray for this war to stop, and that not again should we see any such acts of indecency in the world.

In the past months, our vision of a trans-national church has been visibly demonstrated by our various structures. The visit to Zimbabwe by the Moderator and the General Secretary, and the subsequent welcome they received in the Presbytery must therefore be a welcome development in our Denomination. We are also seeing a much closer integrated environment in the way our structures like our Fellowships embrace trans-nationality. The Presbyterian Link Team believes that our church is setting a trend in the principle of regional integration.

Once more, we present this Edition of the Presbyterian Link to you, our committed readers. Share this newsletter as widely as possible to ensure that Presbyterians and non-Presbyterian friends can too, see the Glory of God through these visuals.

We still remind you all and sundry, to continue sending us those stories to share within and outside the Denomination.

Please enjoy the February Edition of the Presbyterian Link.

Good Friends in Christ

Mgwali Mission and the legacy of Tiyo Soga

On Monday 2 March, I travelled to the Eastern Cape to visit the Mgwali Mission near Stutterheim. I was accompanied by the Revs Allan Nyoni and BZ Mkentane (Moderator of the Presbytery of Amathole and Interim Moderation of the Mgwali Church). The Mgwali Mission was established by Tiyo Soga (the first Black Presbyterian Minister in South Africa and the person after whom our Central Office in Johannesburg is named) and his wife Janet in 1857, after his graduation in Scotland.

We travelled to Mgwali to meet in situ with Dr Jongi Klaas, a heritage historian, to see the ruins of the Mission station with a view to redeveloping the site as a place of historical interest and a part of our faith history as Presbyterians.

This meeting was preceded last December by a meeting with a group of Business persons with links to the Eastern Cape who are interested in contributing toward this project. Some are Presbyterians and others have family links to the area. The group do not seek to buy the site but to collaborate with us in re-establishing



Rev Dr George Marchinkowski General Secretary

some of the old buildings, to create a space for a small museum to take shape, to perhaps cater for groups of children and adults who want to learn more about Tiyo Soga, his family and legacy. Dr Klaas regaled us with stories of Soga and his family as well as situating Soga in the historical context of his time.

In these photos that follow, you will see the Mission Church of Mgwali (with its clock tower) that is still in good shape along with the ruined buildings of the old Mission station, part of which we hope to restore. There is also a pic of the team of elders, three ministers (including me) and Dr Jongi Klaas (with hat!).

What a wonderful project this will be if we can work together to make it happen!

Accompanying the Moderator to Zimbabwe

In another article in this edition, you will find an account written by the Moderator of a trip he and I took to Zimbabwe

at the invitation of that Presbytery. We visited the Called to Care outreach project in Mutare, attended the Presbytery meeting in Bulawayo and participated in the opening of a new sanctuary for the Mufakose congregation in Harare. The UPCSA is growing in some places, and it is a powerful experience to see a church on the move.

Recruitment of Staff

Later this year, the **Clerk of Assembly** – the Rev Vusi Mkhungu will demit office and the Church Office and HR Committee is hard at work to recruit and present a new candidate for this position. The advert was circulated through all

channels for three months. The deadline of 28 February 2026 has now passed. The committee will in these next three months (March to May 2026) engage in the same process as it did last year in the recruitment of the General Secretary. Please pray for the committee and its Task Team to follow God's guidance and proceed through what is ahead with discernment. The name will be presented to the Executive Commission in June.

In addition to the recruitment of the Clerk, Mr Ronnie Maqubela – our **PEF Administrator** – is retiring on 30 September 2026. The Church Office and HR Committee is currently undertaking a thorough review of the PEF Staffing needs and its operations so that it can formulate an advert for the position. The report on the Review will be given to the full COHRC in April and the recruitment process will start soon after that. Keep the Task Team in your prayers.

As you will see from another article in this edition, we were pleased to welcome **Ms Mandisa Nomfanelo Mbatha** as our **Intern**. This is after an intense recruitment process where we received 34 transnational applications from across the UPCSA. The Internship is sponsored by an outside funder and allows us to engage the intern in experience

enlargement as well as alleviating the pressure on members of staff who are helped in all areas of the Central Office life. This year the intern will spend a considerable amount of time assisting the Clerk of Assembly and Chief Financial Officer in following up on an expended Appendix D(3) which has been rolled out to all congregations. The aim is to update the UPCSA's statistical database which is heavily out of date and sorely needed for our planning and for the relationships we have with ecumenical bodies (including the Grant making ones).

Welcome Mandisa!



Looking towards the Executive Commission

The Clerk's department is preparing for the 2026 Executive Commission. While this is a smaller meeting (approx. 60 people) than the General Assembly, it is nevertheless quite a logistical exercise. The Clerk has written to all Presbytery Clerks about the arrangements.

The Chief Financial Officer is also involved in the calculating of projected costs etc as is the Business Committee under the leadership of the Rev Mamalotje Magagane. Standing Orders have been agreed and the Preliminary Agenda has been set. The Local Organising Committee chaired by the Moderator of the Highveld Presbytery, the Rev Wayne van Heerden, are at an advanced level of preparation. The Gateway Church (right next to the Central Office) will be the main venue and the Central Office rooms will be used to house various Insaka groups and admin activities. Pray for us – that God will bring these plans to fruition and that resources will be made available where these seem sparse.

What remains is for me to wish all readers a meaningful Lent and happy Easter Season. We serve a Risen Saviour who is alive and active in His church.

Much love to all God's people



JJK 100 Years



JJK 100 Years



MODERATOR'S CORNER

There was great joy, worship, dancing and celebration at the dedication of the Mufakose Presbyterian Church Sanctuary this morning in Harare. The Church was full to capacity and a lot more people sat outside the Church building because of lack of space inside the Church. It was great to see the fruit of commitment of local church members expressed in this newly built Church building. Glory to God 🙌. See pics below.

Your Partner in Mission (PIM)

Kasambala in Harare, Zimbabwe 🇿🇼

Marathon race in Orlando, Egoli Presbytery

Good morning, Partners in Prayer and in Mission.

The Marathon race today takes me to Orlando Soweto in Johannesburg. This morning, I have a workshop for Leaders of Fellowships and Presbytery on Rebuilding - Governance structures of the UPCSA, Leadership and the Role of Fellowships and local congregations in the UPCSA. It's going to be another busy day.

Tomorrow, we have a big Covenant Service of Egoli Presbytery congregations. Keep us in your prayers 🙌

Your Partner in Mission (PIM)

Kasambala

Good morning, Dr. Amon

I just wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you for the time and wisdom that you invested in us yesterday.

I walked away from that session feeling like I have more knowledge about what is expected of a leader, and I am now equipped with the skills to start planning and taking charge as a leader in the various aspects of my life.

God bless you for what you have done for us as a youth (the future of GPC).

Thank you!

Warm regards

Jocelyn 🙌

Called to Care teams meeting in different groups yesterday for their personal skills development in the Mutare St Columba's Presbyterian Church Hall. The GS and I participated in these discussions and training.

Your Partner in Mission (PIM)

AK

MODERATOR'S CORNER

Presbyterian family members are making a difference.

Mutare St Columba's Called to Care - Zimbabwe

The GS and I arrived in Zimbabwe on Wednesday afternoon. We were warmly welcomed by the Moderator and Clerk of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. We drove three and half hours from Harare to Mutare, where we were again warmly welcomed by the Revs Paul and Lydia Neshangwe, Ministers at St Columba's Mutare.

Yesterday morning, we were introduced to the **Called to Care**, an initiative of Mutare St Columba's congregation under the leadership of Revs Paul and Lydia Neshangwe, the Session and the Board of Called to Care to care for Orphans and most vulnerable women in Mutare. It will be an understatement to say that we were stunned to see the Gospel in real action - Partners in Mission - at work, transforming the lives of the most vulnerable women in Mutare.

Called to Care is not just another organization for the Care of vulnerable women and orphans - **it is a life transformative community organization**. Vulnerable women are brought under its care - spiritual, psychological and physical care. The women are taught new skills to help them go and start businesses, thus starting a new life altogether. Personal skills development and leadership as a major channel of transformation is doing wonders in the lives of these vulnerable women. We saw it demonstrated practically.

Special computer skills, farming skills, sewing and tailoring skills, Cosmetology (nails, hair etc) skills, and catering (hospitality skills). The women are divided into these groups and are mentored and tutored by specialized teachers - some retired Presbyterian College and university lecturers/ professionals and skilled IT specialists. Both the GS and I participated in these groups and experienced for ourselves the quality of knowledge and skill transfer. **I felt very proud as a Presbyterian and as a Christian** - this was indeed seeing Partners in Mission at work making the gospel to come alive.

Later in the evening, we met a dedicated team of St Columba's Mutare elders, the Board members of Called to Care and their spouses, and the finance team. I just wished you were here to experience this 🙌. I will share some pics below for your inspiration. Please do not circulate outside our Presbyterian family to protect those in the pics.

I will also share with you about another experience we had at a local community Presbyterian congregation also within Mutare. Chat later.

We are driving this morning 8 hours from Mutare to Bulawayo for a Presbytery meeting. Keep us in your prayers.

Your Partner in Mission

AK



Her service extended beyond Zambia when she was appointed minister in charge of a Presbyterian congregation in Wales in the United Kingdom, further demonstrating the global reach of her ministry and dedication to spreading the message of faith and unity.

Rev Nyirongo's children recall the early years of her ministry, particularly when the family lived in Lilanda. At the time, life was not easy. Water was scarce and the community faced frequent break-ins. Despite these challenges, the church community stood firmly by the family.

Church members often helped fetch water, provided protection and shared food and shelter whenever the family needed support. For the Nyirongo family, the church became far more than a place of worship.

"In those moments, the church was not just a congregation; it was our family," the family recalled, expressing gratitude for the love and solidarity shown during those formative years.

As Rev Nyirongo prepares to step down from active service, many within the church say her influence will continue to be felt for years to come. Her ministry has been marked by a deep commitment to compassion, service and community building.

Upon retirement, Rev Nyirongo will assume the honorary title of Reverend Emeritus, a recognition of her remarkable contribution to the church.

Church members say her legacy is not only measured by the years she served, but by the many lives she touched and the enduring spirit of faith she leaves behind.

After Nearly Four Decades of Service, Rev Nyirongo Bids Farewell to Active Ministry

By Marc Ngoma

Rev Jane Nyirongo will retire from active ministry in April 2026 after 37 years of dedicated service as a minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa.

Her long and distinguished ministry began when she was a young woman answering a calling to serve God and her community. Over nearly four decades, Rev Nyirongo has become widely known for her compassion, humility and unwavering commitment to strengthening Christian fellowship within the church.

Throughout her ministry, she served several congregations across Zambia, including those in Matero, Kaunda Square and Garden, where she played a key role in nurturing congregational life and providing spiritual guidance to countless families.

TO ALL IN THE UPCSA



Introduction of the UPCSA Intern 2026

We are pleased to introduce our Intern for 2026. Her name is Mandisa Nomafanelo Mbatha. She has started her internship on the 2nd March 2026.

This her brief description of herself:

"I am Mandisa Nomfanelo Mbatha, am embracing a new chapter, inspired by Isaiah 43:19. I am rooted in faith, and love growth, laughter, and flowers. As a soft and easy going individual, I enjoy trying new things and meeting people. My focus is on growing closer to God and living a vibrant life"

This internship forms part of the Church's intentional programme of leadership development and ministry formation. It provides an opportunity for practical exposure to the structures, governance, and mission work of the denomination, while deepening spiritual growth and vocational discernment.

Throughout 2026, the Intern will engage with various ministries and administrative responsibilities within the Church, gaining experience in ecclesial processes, communication, programme coordination, and service to Presbyteries and Congregations.

We invite the Church to extend a warm welcome and to support the Intern through prayer and fellowship. May this year be marked by learning, faithful service, and growth for both the Intern and the wider Church.

Yours faithfully,

Rev Dr George Marchinowski

General Secretary



GARDEN PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP OF YOUTH BRINGS HOPE TO PATIENTS THROUGH HOSPITAL MINISTRY

By Marc Ngoma

The Presbyterian Church has long been recognized as a caring community that extends compassion not only to its members but also to neighbours in society. In the spirit of Christian fellowship, the church considers everyone a neighbour and has consistently demonstrated this through acts of service to the sick, the vulnerable and even those in correctional facilities.

At Garden Presbyterian Church, this culture of care continues to grow through the active involvement of the Fellowship of Youth, who are taking a leading role in mission work. Rather than limiting outreach activities to a specific month dedicated to missions, the youth believe that every day should present an opportunity to serve others and share the love of Christ.

Recently, the church's Youth Fellowship conducted a hospital visitation at Levy Mwanawasa University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. The visit, which was led by Elder Sten K. Nkhoma, was primarily intended to check on one of the church members who had been admitted to the facility. However, the young people also took the opportunity to extend their ministry to other patients within the ward.

During the visit, the youths spent time praying with patients, sharing words of encouragement and offering spiritual comfort to those going through difficult moments of illness and recovery. Their presence brought a sense of hope and reassurance to many in the ward, reminding them that they were not alone in their struggles.

Speaking after the visit, Elder Nkhoma explained that while the team had gone to see a fellow congregant, they felt compelled to minister to others around them as well.

"We went to do a hospital ministry and visit one of our members at Levy Mwanawasa as Garden Presbyterian youths. We might have gone to visit our brother, but we also took time to pray with the sick in the ward," he said.

He added that the experience was uplifting not only for the patients but also for the caregivers and bedside attendants who listened attentively during the brief moments of prayer and sharing of the Word of God.

"Just as the sick desire healing and assurance of grace from God, so do the people taking care of them. It was encouraging to see even the bedside attendants giving us their attention as we shared the Word of God," Elder Nkhoma said.

Through such initiatives, Garden Presbyterian Church continues to demonstrate that mission work goes beyond organized programs. For the church's Youth Fellowship, hospital ministry is a reminder that the call to serve and care for others is a daily responsibility grounded in faith, compassion and community.



eGoli PRESBYTERY

Orlando Congregation

eGoli Fellowship Leaders workshop took place at Orlando Presbyterian Church on Saturday, 28 February 2026





LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

Stuartville Congregation

The Education and Training Committee of Stuartville Congregation hosted a training session for Church Fellowships and the Stewardship Committee on the 20th of February 2026. Facilitated by the team led by Elder Aggie Phatudi Mashala (Convener), Elder Maggie Rangoato and Elder Tlabaki Tleane, the workshop dealt with topics such as Reporting and Accountability, Conflict Management and Financial reporting. Almost 40 members attended the workshop.





LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

Lebowakgomo Congregation

History was made in Lebowakgomo, Presbytery of Limpopo, when the ecumenical structure of men was brought alive. Conceptualised some few years ago, the inaugural Executive Committee of the Lebowakgomo Ecumenical Men's Movement, abbreviated as LEMEMO, was inducted on Sunday, by their newly appointed Chaplain, Rev Lethabo Mabotja of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

The message of the day was delivered by Rev Moloisane of the AME, who read from the book of Exodus 3: 7-19, under the theme 'Welcome to the jungle'.

We congratulate the men of Lebowakgomo for this progressive step and wish them well as they





LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

Makwarela Congregation

The Presbytery of Limpopo has resolved that for each of the Presbytery meeting held, each Congregation must donate at least two pairs of shoes to the host Congregation to donate to needy children. This is done in cash or kind. The first thirty-six pairs were donated to Makwarela Congregation on the 14th of February 2026. Here Rev Dr Christ Mkwandawire and Elder Nematei, former Session clerk of Makwarela is seen receiving the shoes. We give thanks to the mighty God for the hand that gives.





LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

Makwarela Congregation

The Presbytery of Limpopo held a retirement service for Rev Mukondi Ramulondi on the 1st of March 2026 at his home Congregation in Makwarela. Rev Ramulondi served amongst others in the following Congregations, Gooldeville, Stuartville, St Mungos and Mt Horeb. He also served as Secretary of the Ministry Committee, Moderator of Presbytery and General Assembly respectively. The Presbyterian Link team wish Rev Ramulondi well in his retirement.







LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

Mt Horeb Congregation

The Fellowship of Men in Limpopo held its Council Meeting on Saturday, the 7th of March 2026 at Mt Horeb Congregation. The meeting was attended by 13 of its 14 branches from all corners of the Presbytery. Five Ministers and sixty-four delegates were in attendance. The Council, held after the Presbytery's hosting of the Denominational Conference discussed a whole array of issues from building a strong Fellowship to issues of evangelism.





LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

Stuartville Congregation

The Stuartville Congregation in Presbytery of Limpopo held its Rededication Day for all the Fellowships on Sunday the 5th of March 2026





LIMPOPO PRESBYTERY

Mt Horeb Congregation

Today, the 15th of March 2026, the Presbytery of Limpopo inducted Rev Mamolotje Magagane to Mt Horeb Congregation. The service, Presided by the Moderator of Presbytery, Rev Dikobe Molaba is attended by people from near, including members of his previous Congregation, Semple Memorial Congregation.



Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

Ministers and Spouses Retreat



By Rev. CJ Ndukwe

The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria recently held its Ministers and Spouses Retreat from January 13 to 16, 2026, bringing together clergy and their partners from across the country for a time of spiritual renewal, fellowship and reflection.

The retreat took place at the Presbyterian Camp Ground, popularly known as the City of Light, located in Yakurr, Cross River State. The gathering has become an important event in the church's calendar, providing ministers and their spouses with an opportunity to begin the year strengthened spiritually and united in purpose for the work of ministry.

The Ministers and Spouses Retreat was initiated by the immediate past administration of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria and has now been in existence for nearly a decade. Held every two years in January, the retreat aims to help ministers and their spouses deepen their relationships while drawing strength from God as they prepare for another year of service.

This year's retreat attracted more than 2,000 ministers and their spouses, including husbands married to female ministers. The large attendance highlighted the church's commitment to supporting the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of clergy families.

Single ministers were also encouraged to attend the retreat. Their participation provided an opportunity to learn about building strong Christian homes, choosing life partners wisely and preparing families that can positively influence both the church and society.

The four-day programme featured a range of spiritual and educational activities designed to strengthen both ministry and family life. These included praise and worship sessions, Bible studies, hymn singing, fervent prayers, Holy Communion and the preaching of the Word of God.



Participants also took part in marriage seminars, discipleship and soul-winning teachings, testimonies of God's goodness, and interactive discussions addressing marital challenges faced in ministry. In addition, special sessions were conducted on the use of digital tools to enhance church ministry in an evolving technological environment.

However, the retreat was also marked by a moment of sorrow after some ministers were involved in a road accident while travelling to the gathering. Several sustained injuries while one fatality was recorded, the late Rev. Cornelius Benjamin, whose passing was mourned by the church community.

The retreat was attended by principal officers of the General Assembly, including Synod Moderators and Clerks, reflecting its significance in the life and mission of the church.



**Author is Rev C J Ndukwe.
Nigerian Presbyterian
Church Minister. Iquita
mission station Oron
Parish.**



SYNOD OF ZAMBIA

George Presbyterian Church

Women Mark International Women's Day with Rededication Service held at George Presbyterian Church



Women from the Fellowship of Women in the Mchinga Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Zambia commemorated International Women's Day with their annual rededication service and blousing ceremony held in March.

The event, which takes place once every year, is a significant occasion for women in the presbytery as it allows them to renew their commitment to God and to the mission of the women's fellowship within the church.

The rededication service brings together women from various congregations under Mchinga Presbytery to reflect on their spiritual journey, reaffirm their faith and strengthen their role in supporting the church's ministry and community outreach programmes.

Speaking during the event, former Fellowship of Women President Tikazi Chirwa described the occasion as an important moment for the women in the church.

"This is an important day for the women because it reminds us of our commitment and dedication to God and the mission of women in the church," she said.

By Isaac Botha



Mrs Chirwa explained that the blousing ceremony, which forms part of the celebrations, is a symbolic tradition within the fellowship that represents dedication, unity and readiness to serve in the work of the Lord.

She said the ceremony is not merely a formality but a powerful reminder of the responsibility women carry in supporting the spiritual growth of the church and the welfare of their communities.

“Just like the rededication service, the blousing is an important symbol for our fellowship. It reflects our commitment to the work of the Lord and to the mission entrusted to women in the church,” she said.

During the service, members take time to pray, worship and renew their pledge to serve faithfully in various church activities, including evangelism, charity work and community support initiatives.

The annual gathering also provides an opportunity for fellowship and encouragement among women as they share experiences and strengthen their bonds of unity in faith.

For the women of Mchinga Presbytery, the rededication service and blousing ceremony remain a vital part of their spiritual calendar, serving as a reminder of their calling to serve God and contribute meaningfully to the growth and mission of the Presbyterian Church of Zambia.



Presbyterian family members are making a difference.

Mutare St Columba's Called to Care Zimbabwe

The GS and I arrived in Zimbabwe on Wednesday afternoon. We warmly were welcomed by the Moderator and Clerk of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. We drove three and half hours from Harare to Mutare, where we were again warmly welcomed by the Revs Paul and Lydia Neshangwe, Ministers at St Columba's Mutare.

Yesterday morning, we were introduced to the Called to Care, an initiative of Mutare St Columba's congregation under the leadership of Revs Paul and Lydia Neshangwe, the Session and the Board of Called to Care to care for Orphans and most vulnerable women in Mutare. It will be an understatement to say that we were stunned to see the Gospel in real action- Partners in Mission - at work, transforming the lives of the most vulnerable women in Mutare. Called to Care is not just another organization for the Care of vulnerable women and orphans - it is a life transformative community organization. Vulnerable women are brought under its care - spiritual, psychological, and physical care.

The women are taught new skills to help them go and start businesses, thus starting a new life altogether. Personal skills development and leadership as a major channel of transformation is doing wonders in the lives of these vulnerable women. We saw it demonstrated practically. Special

computer skills, farming skills, sewing, and tailoring skills, Cosmetology (nails, hair etc) skills, and catering (hospitality skills). The women are divided into these groups and are mentored and tutored by specialized teachers - some retired Presbyterian College and university lecturers/ professionals and skilled IT specialists. Both the GS and I participated in these groups and

experienced for ourselves the quality of knowledge and skill transfer. I felt very proud as a Presbyterian and as a Christian this was indeed seeing Partners in Mission at work making the gospel to come alive. Later in the evening, we met a dedicated team of St Columba's Mutare elders, the Board members of Called to Care and their spouses, and the finance team. I just wished you were here to experience this. I will share some pics below for your inspiration. Please do not circulate outside our Presbyterian family to protect those in the pics.

I will also share with you about another experience we had at a local community Presbyterian congregation also within Mutare. Chat later.

We are driving this morning 8 hours from Mutare to Bulawayo for a Presbytery meeting. Keep us in your prayers.

Your Partner in Mission

AK



ZIMBABWE PRESBYTERY

Partners in Mission: UPCSA Leaders Spread Hope in Zimbabwe



Harare, Zimbabwe - The Moderator of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA), Rt Rev Dr Amon Kasambala, and the General Secretary embarked on a church assignment in Zimbabwe, strengthening ties with local congregations and celebrating milestones.

Arriving on Wednesday, they visited Mutare's St Columba's Church, where they were impressed by the "Called to Care" initiative- an Onesimus Project supporting vulnerable women and orphans. The project empowers women with skills like computer training, farming, sewing, cosmetology, and catering, transforming lives and fostering community development. "It was stunning to see the Gospel in real action," said Dr Kasambala. As Isaiah 58:12 says, "Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings."

In Bulawayo, they attended a Presbytery meeting, engaging with church leaders. On Sunday, they participated in a grand worship service in Harare and dedicated a new sanctuary at Mufakose Presbyterian Church, celebrating the congregation's commitment.

"Glory to God," said Dr Kasambala, reflecting on the overflowing congregation and vibrant celebration. As Philippians 4:13 reminds us, "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

The visit highlights the UPCSA's dedication to community transformation and spiritual growth in Zimbabwe.





PRESBYTERY OF ZIMBABWE

The presence of the Moderator of the General Assembly and the General Secretary truly elevated our Presbytery of Zimbabwe Administrative Council meeting, instilling a stronger sense of community and purpose. Their insights and guidance have had a long term impact on our church family, inspiring us to recommit to our mission and values. We look forward to seeing how God continues to shape us.



PASTORAL REFLECTION



THE CASE OF THE US-ISRAEL WAR AND THE KILLING OF CHILDREN IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: THE ALTER OF CHRIST AND THE TEMPTATION OF POLITICAL POWER

A Pastoral Reflection on War, Conscience, and the Responsibility of the Church -By Rev. Chala Habasila

In moments of global tension and war, the church is confronted with a serious spiritual test: Will it remain faithful to Christ, or will it become captive to political power?

Recent reports and images circulating in the public sphere have shown prominent church leaders surrounding and praying for President Dolnad Trump while expressing support for political actions on the war on Iran . At the same time, heartbreaking images of innocent children bombed in an elementary school—have reminded the world that war is never merely a political strategy; it is a human tragedy. As Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' The tragedy of innocent lives lost in one place should stir the

conscience of the whole world. Whenever children die in violence, the church must pause. It must lament. It must examine its own conscience. The Christian faith teaches that every human life bears the image of God. A child in a classroom in the Middle East is not a political statistic; that child is a sacred life created by God. The death of innocent children should break the heart of the church rather than be explained away by political rhetoric.

THE DANGER OF BLIND LOYALTY

One of the gravest temptations for religious leaders is the temptation to attach the authority of the church to the ambitions of political leaders. Throughout history, whenever the

church becomes too closely aligned with political power, it risks losing its prophetic voice.

The role of the church is not to function as a religious endorsement committee for political figures. The church is called to speak truth—even when that truth challenges the powerful.

When church leaders offer unconditional loyalty to political leaders or echo political propaganda that justifies violence against civilians, they risk confusing the kingdom of God with the kingdoms of this world. Such behavior raises serious ethical and spiritual questions.

Spiritual leadership carries accountability. The pulpit is not a stage for political theater; it is a sacred place where truth, justice, and the Gospel must be proclaimed.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST ON RECONCILIATION AND PEACE

Jesus offers a very different vision from the logic of war and retaliation. In Matthew 5:23–24, Christ's teaching reveals something profound about the heart of God. At the altar of Christ there is no room for hatred, revenge, or violence against one's neighbor. The altar is a place for repentance, reconciliation, and restoration. It is a place where enemies are called to become neighbors again. When the church blesses warlike ambitions without first pleading for peace and reconciliation, it risks contradicting the very teaching of the Lord it claims to serve.

THE PROPHETIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

The prophets of Scripture never flattered kings or justified injustice. Instead, they confronted leaders when they abused power or endangered human life. That prophetic tradition continues in the mission of the church today.

This does not mean that Christians must hate political leaders or refuse to pray for them. Scripture calls believers to pray for all leaders. But prayer should never become political endorsement, nor should it be used to sanctify violence or unlawful aggression.

When church leaders appear to support actions that may violate international law or cause harm to innocent people, especially children, the wider body of Christ has a responsibility to ask serious moral questions. Leadership in the church must always remain accountable to the Gospel.

THE TRUE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

The church's credibility in the world depends on its faithfulness to Christ's teachings. When the church stands with the suffering, speaks for the voiceless, and calls for peace, it reflects the heart of the Gospel.

But when the church appears to celebrate war or align itself uncritically with political power, it risks damaging its witness.

The world does not need a church that echoes political propaganda.

The world needs a church that reflects the compassion, justice, and peacemaking of Christ.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

That calling remains before us today. The altar of Christ must remain a place where war bows to peace, hatred bows to reconciliation, and power bows to truth. And when church leaders forget this sacred calling, the church must lovingly but firmly call them back to the Gospel.





Dear Brethren,

I hope you are well and the family is fine.

Find herein a pastoral reflection on the case of the US–Israel war and the killing of children in an elementary school.

In times like these, the church is called to reflect deeply on the teachings of Christ and the sacred value of human life.

Let us continue to pray for an end to these wars, for the triumph of love over hatred. May the Lord guide the hearts of leaders and nations toward peace, reconciliation, and justice.

Grace and peace of Christ be with us all.

In Christ,

Chala H

DISCLAIMER

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

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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