



# Another Dimension

JANUARY 2026



## ***The MCSA Platform of Work for 2026***

The 2025 Conference of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) was historic. For the first time since the Journey to the New Land in the early 1990s, Conference and Mission Congress met back-to-back. This convergence was not accidental. It signalled a decisive moment in the life of the Church—a call to move from intention to action, from maintenance to mission, and from comfort to courageous obedience.

Out of this moment emerged the guiding theme that will shape the MCSA's work for the next three years, and particularly our platform of work for 2026: "Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry" Subtheme for the year: "The Other Side Awaits."

### **A World in Crisis—and a Church at the Crossroads**

Conference met against the backdrop of a deeply fractured world. We live in what is often described as a "global village", yet it is increasingly brutal—marked by war, inequality, political instability, and the erosion of ethics and accountability. Across Africa and the Middle East, coups, conflict, poverty, and humanitarian crises

continue to strip people—especially women, children, persons with disabilities, and the poor—of dignity and hope.

Society itself is polarised into "us" and "them", where belonging, resources, and opportunity are unevenly distributed. In this context, the Church is confronted with a piercing question: Where are we, and what are we doing, while the world bleeds?

The Presiding Bishop reminded Conference that the Church remains the hope of the hopeless—a dealer in hope. Yet she also spoke with painful honesty: too often, the Church has itself become a space of pain, inequality, and exclusion. We proclaim justice but struggle to practise it. We speak of healing yet remain unhealed. This incongruence, she warned, has stifled mission and weakened our prophetic witness.

### **Relocation: A Change of Mind, Spirit, and Direction**

The call to relocation is not about physical movement, but about a profound internal shift. It demands rethinking, reassessing, and reviewing who we are and why we exist.

### **Special Points of Interest:**

- The MCSA Calls for Prayer and Support Amid Devastating Floods in SA and Mozambique (page 3)
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# Another Dimension

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After more than two centuries of Methodism in Southern Africa, the Church is challenged not to rest on past achievements or remain paralysed by past failures, but to embrace a transformative spirituality—one that is lived daily and rooted deeply in Christ.

Relocation calls the MCSA to:

- Move from blame to responsibility
- Take ownership of God's mission
- Disturb the status quo
- Speak truth, even when it is risky
- Declare with courage: Not in our name

Without being repositioned toward Christ, there can be no renewal, revival, or transformation.

## Repositioning: From Maintenance to Mission

Repositioning requires the Church to rethink its strategies, structures, and habits in light of today's realities. It does not require new "uniforms", but it does demand new ways of working.

At the heart of repositioning is the recovery of mission as God's mission—the Missio Dei. Mission does not belong to the Church; it belongs to God. The Church is invited to participate, not to control.

For 2026, the platform of work calls the MCSA to:

- Stop demoting mission and prioritising institutional maintenance
- Move beyond conferences and resolutions as ends in themselves
- Translate vision into concrete, visible action
- Align what we say, believe, and do

As Conference heard, good intentions are not enough. The world is not transformed by what the Church plans, but by what the Church actually does.

## "The Other Side Awaits": A Biblical Mandate

Drawing from Mark 4 and 5, the Presiding Bishop reminded the Church that Jesus himself commanded relocation: "Let us cross over to the other side." The journey was turbulent. The storm was real. But Christ was at the stern—the place of stability, direction, and control.

On the other side, Jesus did not meet a crowd or a conference. He met Legion—the othered, the broken, the violent, the forgotten man living among the tombs. Healing happened not in the safety of the boat, but in risky engagement on the margins.

So it is with the Church today. The legions of our time will not come to our buildings.

The Church must go to them.

## What the MCSA Is Called to Do and Be in 2026

As the Church embraces its 2026 platform of work, the call is clear:

- To move from preaching to the choir to serving the wounded
- To shift from the ministry of excitement to the ministry of need
- To give dignity to those deemed insignificant
- To humanise the dehumanised
- To be present in streets, schools, boardrooms, clinics, and communities
- To practise a faith that crosses frontiers and faces discomfort

This is a call to leave behind "ambulance ministry"—endlessly reacting to crises—and instead address root causes through sustained, incarnational mission.

## A Call to Courageous Obedience

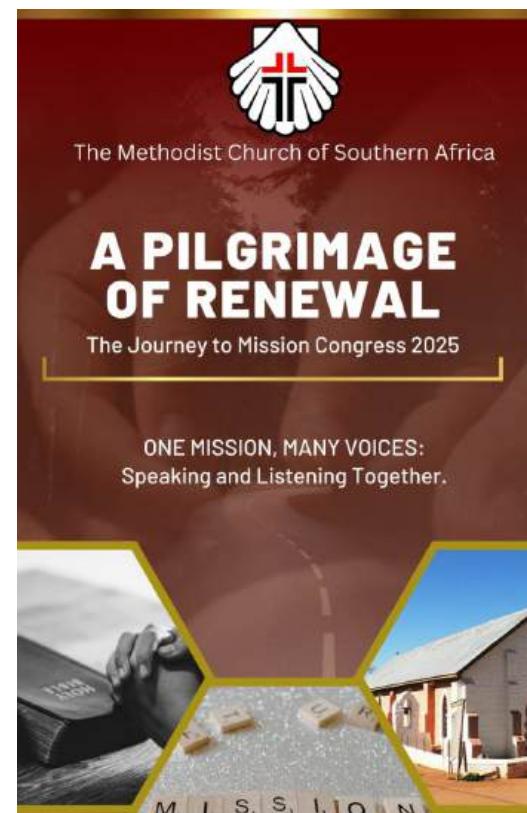
The other side is waiting—hopelessly, helplessly, and painfully. And the Church is called to respond, not with fear, delay, or politicking, but with faith and obedience.

As the Presiding Bishop concluded, the Church is not called to comfort or success, but to obedience.

**To care more than seems wise.  
To risk more than seems safe.**

**To dream more than seems practical.  
To expect more than seems possible.**

Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry—because the other side awaits.



# THE MCSA CALLS FOR PRAYER AND SUPPORT AMID DEVASTATING FLOODS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND MOZAMBIQUE

*“Carry Each Other’s Burdens”*

—Galatians 6:2

Our region is currently facing one of the most severe weather crises in recent memory. Weeks of relentless rainfall have caused catastrophic flooding across parts of South Africa and Mozambique, leaving communities devastated, families displaced, and many grieving the loss of loved ones.

In South Africa, heavy rains have battered the northeastern provinces, particularly Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and parts of KwaZulu-Natal. Rivers have burst their banks, homes and roads have been swept away, and essential infrastructure is badly damaged. Thousands of families have had their lives upended, and the government has declared a national disaster as rescue operations and relief efforts continue.

Meanwhile across the border in Mozambique, prolonged flooding has inundated vast rural and urban areas. The National Institute for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction reports that over 200 000 people have been affected, with more than 100 lives already lost and hundreds of thousands displaced or seeking higher ground. Food supplies, farmland, and transport links have been severely disrupted.

These floods extend beyond isolated rainfall; communities that were already vulnerable—facing poverty, food insecurity, and strained services—are now confronting even greater hardship. The destruction of homes, contamination of water sources, and disruption of basic services heighten the risk of illness and long-term suffering.

## A Time for the Church to Stand in Solidarity

In times like this, the Church is called to be both a house of prayer and a hands-and-feet presence of Christ’s love in the world. The Bible reminds us that God hears the cries of the afflicted and calls His people to compassionate action.

### Here is how you can respond:

#### Pray Without Ceasing

Let us join together in prayer for:

- First responders and rescue workers
- Safe shelter and resources for displaced communities
- Wisdom for government and relief leaders

May our prayers be fervent and persistent, asking God to comfort the grieving and protect the vulnerable.

#### Support Practical Relief Efforts

Many communities urgently need food, clean water, clothing, blankets, hygiene supplies, and long-term rebuilding support. We encourage every congregation to explore ways to:

- Collect relief items
- Partner with trusted ecumenical partners, NGOs, and local relief networks
- Offer financial contributions through the Mission Unit

If your Society or Circuit would like help identifying trusted relief partners or coordinating a relief drive, let us know and the Mission Unit can help connect you with resources and guidance.

#### Be the Church in Word and Deed

As Christ’s body, we are called not only to lament suffering but to bring healing and hope. Scripture teaches us that “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17). In offering tangible care for those who are hurting, we demonstrate the love of Jesus in ways that transform hearts and rebuild hope.

#### A Call to Reflect Christ’s Compassion

These floods are a stark reminder of our shared vulnerability and interdependence—our Connexionality. Our neighbours—in townships, rural villages, and along riverbanks—are enduring unimaginable hardship. As God’s people, let us respond not with indifference, but with urgency, compassion, and prayerful action.

Let us lift our voices in prayer and extend our hands in help—for in serving the least of these, we serve Christ Himself.



# THE GREAT ANNOUNCEMENT: A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND COURAGE



Article based on the sermon preached by Rev. Dr Sidwell Mokgothu at the induction of Ms Lesego Manamela, Mabopane Circuit, 7 December 2025.

The induction of Ms Lesego Manamela as the new Lay Leader of the Limpopo District took place at a time when South Africa is grappling with deep uncertainty. With the nation following the revelations of the Madlanga Commission and the Parliamentary inquiry into corruption within the criminal justice system, many South Africans describe the country as feeling like a “horror movie”—one full of deception, compromised leadership, and predatory forces eroding the soul of the nation.

Against this backdrop, Rev. Dr Sidwell Mokgothu, Bishop of the Limpopo District, reminded the church that this induction is not accidental but a pastoral placement by God into a context that needs courageous, faith-rooted leadership.

## Advent for Our Time

Preaching from Isaiah 11:1–5 and Luke 1:26–38, Bishop Mokgothu grounded his message in the meaning of Advent—a season of waiting, anticipation, and stubborn hope.

He emphasised that Advent waiting is not passive but active, prayerful, and attentive, resisting the pressure for instant results and popularity-driven leadership. Christian leadership, he said, requires the discipline of listening for God’s direction rather than acting from ego or fear.

Advent is also a call to anticipate God’s newness—to trust that God is at work even beneath the surface of difficulty, just as seeds germinate unseen. And finally, Advent invites believers to hold defiant, God-anchored hope, especially in times of crisis.

## Mary: A Model for Courageous Leadership

Bishop Mokgothu highlighted Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a powerful model for leaders—especially for Ms Manamela in her new role.

Like Mary, Ms Manamela enters leadership with attributes often undervalued by dominant culture: young, Black, lay, and woman. Mary herself was young, poor, and from the margins of society, yet God entrusted her with a central role in salvation history.

Her story reveals a God who subverts expectations, empowers the lowly, and invites those on the margins to participate in God’s liberating mission.

## The Great Announcement

Reflecting on Gabriel’s message—“Greetings, favoured one!

The Lord is with you... Do not be afraid”—the Bishop offered four assurances for Christian leaders:

- God’s favour is pure grace, not earned through human schemes
- God’s presence guarantees leaders are never alone
- Courage over fear: leaders often face doubt and imposter syndrome, yet God strengthens them to stand firm
- Empowerment by the Holy Spirit replaces human limitation with divine capability

Mary’s response—“Here am I... let it be according to your word”—is the posture of surrender and trust that every Christian leader is called to adopt.

## A Call to Advent Leadership

In closing, the Bishop reminded the congregation that we are Advent people, rooted in the mystery that Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. As Ms Manamela begins her journey, she does so as one favoured by God, stepping into ministry through grace, not merit.

## Ms Manamela’s Response

In her acceptance, Ms Lesego Manamela used the image of a relay race to describe her new calling:

“A relay race is a team event where each member completes part of the course and passes a baton to the next person. I am receiving this baton from my predecessors to complete my part of the race.”

She shared her prayerful hopes for her term of leadership:

- Clear vision and focused implementation, grounded in healthy relationships between clergy and laity—and Bishop, this begins with me, you, and the management team.”
- Building an inclusive church for children and youth, where the 40–40–20 resolution is lived out in practice, ensuring all voices are heard
- Equipping the laity through consistent training programmes throughout the year
- Strengthening Circuits by promoting sustainable resource sharing—both material resources and human skills—across Circuits and mission groups

Concluding her response, she offered a prayer:

“I pray for God to be my compass and guide my steps. I pray for the spirit of discernment—to see and hear where I am needed most. As John Wesley taught his helpers: go not only to those who want you, but to those who need you most.”

# FIFTY YEARS ON: WOMEN'S ORDINATION IN THE MCSA—REMEMBERING THE JOURNEY, DISCERNING THE FUTURE

By Bongie Moyo-Bango

In 1976, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa crossed a historic threshold with the ordination of Rev. Constance Oosthuizen, the first woman to be ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Fifty years later, in 2026, the MCSA pauses to remember, to reflect, and to reimagine what faithfulness to God's call requires in our time.

This anniversary is more than a celebration of an individual milestone. It is an invitation to tell the truth about a journey marked by courage and calling, progress and pain, hope and unfinished work.

## The Courage of a First Step

The ordination of Constance Oosthuizen was a prophetic act. At a time when Church and society were deeply shaped by patriarchal assumptions about leadership, authority, and gender, the MCSA affirmed a simple yet radical truth: God calls whom God wills.

Her ordination was not merely about inclusion; it was a theological statement—that the gifts of the Spirit are not limited by gender, and that faithfulness to the gospel sometimes requires the Church to move ahead of cultural comfort. In that moment, the MCSA aligned itself with a vision of justice rooted in Scripture, conscience, and Methodist theology.

## The Long Road After Ordination

Yet ordination did not end the struggle—it began a long and uneven journey.

Over the past five decades, women have served faithfully as ministers, theologians, chaplains, superintendents, bishops, educators, and pastoral caregivers. They have planted churches, led Circuits, nurtured communities, and carried the gospel into spaces of deep suffering and hope. Their contributions have strengthened the Church in visible and invisible ways.

At the same time, the journey has been marked by resistance, exclusion, and fatigue. Many women ministers have had to work harder to prove their legitimacy, defend their authority, and survive systems not designed with them in mind. Others have encountered subtle and overt forms of discrimination

—from appointment processes and leadership pipelines to everyday attitudes that question their calling.

The Church has passed resolutions affirming women in leadership, yet practice has often lagged behind policy. Representation has improved, but parity remains elusive. Progress has been real—but fragile.

## Highs Worth Celebrating

As we mark 50 years, there is much to give thanks for:

- The growing number of women ordained and serving across the Connexion
- The election and consecration of women Bishops and the first and second women Presiding Bishops
- Increased theological reflection on gender justice within the MCSA
- Younger generations of clergy who assume women's leadership as normal rather than exceptional
- Stories of resilient faith, perseverance, and transformative ministry

These are signs that the Spirit has not ceased to work within the Church.

## Lows We Must Name Honestly

Commemoration without truth-telling would be incomplete. This anniversary also calls the MCSA to acknowledge:

- The slow pace of structural transformation
- The persistence of patriarchal cultures within church life
- The emotional and spiritual cost borne by women who serve in hostile or sceptical environments
- The gap between our prophetic language and lived reality

To name these truths is not to weaken the Church, but to strengthen it—for healing begins where honesty is allowed.

## Looking Ahead: The Next 50 Years

As the MCSA looks to the future, the question before us is no longer whether women can be ordained—that question was answered in 1976. The deeper question is whether the Church will fully embody what it already believes.

The next chapter calls the MCSA to:

- Move from symbolic inclusion to substantive equality
- Ensure leadership pathways are fair, transparent, and intentional
- Create cultures of accountability where discrimination is challenged, not normalised
- Nurture both women and men into leadership shaped by justice, humility, and service
- Align our structures, theology, and practice with the gospel we proclaim

In a world marked by inequality, violence, and exclusion, the credibility of the Church's witness depends on its willingness to live what it teaches.

As the Methodist Church of Southern Africa marks fifty years since the ordination of the first woman, this milestone calls us not only to remembrance, but to relocation and repositioning for mission and ministry. The journey of women in ordained ministry has itself been a crossing—often turbulent, often resisted, yet faithful to God's call. To honour this legacy in 2026 is to refuse complacency and to recognise that the other side still awaits: the places where women's gifts are fully trusted, where leadership is shared equitably, and where the Church's witness is strengthened by congruence between belief and practice.

## Faithful to the Call

Fifty years after the ordination of Constance Oosthuizen, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa stands at another threshold. The journey toward gender justice in ministry is unfinished—but it is not abandoned.

As we remember the past, we honour those who paved the way, often at great personal cost. As we look to the future, we recommit ourselves to being a Church that recognises God's call, wherever it is found, and responds with courage, obedience, and faith.

If the MCSA is to be truly relocated and repositioned for the Missio Dei, then gender justice cannot remain a historical achievement alone; it must become a living, embodied reality in how we lead, appoint, nurture, and serve.

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The call is clear—to keep crossing over, even when the waters are rough, because obedience to God's mission demands nothing less.

May the next 50 years be marked not only by more women in ministry, but by a Church more deeply shaped by justice, dignity, and the liberating love of Christ.



Rev. Constance Oosthuisen, the first woman to be ordained in the MCSA in 1976, pictured here with Mrs Kathleen Forster



The youngest female minister ordained in 2025 is Rev. Nonhlanhla B Mnisi Nxumalo

## “IF YOUR HEART IS RIGHT WITH MINE, GIVE ME YOUR RIGHT HAND”

### Namibia District has a New Lay Leader

The Namibia District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa gathered in a spirit of gratitude and expectancy for the induction of its third District Lay Leader, Mrs Rolanda van Wyk. Presiding at the service, Bishop Chris Gaya anchored the moment in the biblical call of 2 Kings 10:15: “If your heart is right with mine, give me your right hand.” He reminded the District that leadership in the church is first a covenant of shared hearts, shared vision, and shared commitment to God’s mission.

In a stirring message, Bishop Gaya reflected on the symbolism of the “right hand” as a sign of covenant, unity, and partnership in the work of Christ. Drawing from Scripture and lived realities in Namibia and the region, he emphasised that the District Lay Leader is a vital bridge between clergy and laity, the bishop and the people, policy and lived experience. In a world marked by violence, injustice, substance abuse, and social fragmentation, he called the church to stand united—declaring that unity is the church’s strength, testimony, and power. “When our hearts are aligned and our hands are joined,” he said, “there is no force that can stop the work of God.”

Responding to her induction, Mrs Rolanda van Wyk rose with humility and conviction, grounding her acceptance in Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” She gave thanks to God for the call to serve, acknowledged the leadership of the Connexion, the Namibian District, her Circuit and congregation, and expressed deep gratitude to her family and faith community who have shaped and sustained her journey. She affirmed her commitment to lead collaboratively, intentionally, and in faithfulness to the District’s Strategic Plan endorsed by Synod.

Mrs Van Wyk concluded by aligning herself with the vision of the Presiding Bishop to “relocate and reposition” the church for mission, committing to build relationships of grace, and to serve so that all may find their place in God’s Kingdom. The service closed with a shared sense of covenant and hope—hands joined, hearts aligned, and the Namibia District recommitted to walking together in unity and purpose.



# ZWELITSHA CENTRAL LAUNCHES YMG BOOK

— By TK Sonjica

Towards the end of 2025 the Zwelitsha Central Circuit-312 (ZCM) launched a book on the history of the Young Men's Guild of the old King William's Town Circuit-312 of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA). The book, a product of the research unit of the Circuit YMG, covers the period between 1950 and 2020.

The book has 10 chapters which include among others: The impact of the "Evangelical Crowbar" (Rev. VGK Ntshinga's nickname); Worshipping under two conflicting political ideologies (Apartheid and Black Consciousness); Protests in South Africa and the establishment of the Methodist Church of the Transkei; Political changes in South Africa; The establishment of regions and sections in the MCSA; and The role of the ironwood (umsimbithi) in the YMG of the MCSA.

The then Superintendent at ZCM, Rev. Zukile Makula, expressing his gratitude and appreciation at the publication of the book said it was great to be part of preserving the history and the contribution of courageous men of faith to the development and growth of the YMG of the MCSA in the Qonce area (formerly King William's Town).

Rev. Makula stated that the book will serve as a powerful tool of information to many generations. He added that the book will enlighten them about the sacrifices and the cost of discipleship that many fathers of faith experienced to keep the fire of the gospel burning and the uniqueness of the culture and tradition of the YMG in the old King William's Town Circuit-312 preserved.

"It will give insights of leadership styles and models that made King William's Town Circuit-312 a force to be reckoned with in the former Queenstown District (now Kumkani Hintsa) and the entire Connexion", said Rev. Makula.

Retired Rev. Vuyani Nyobole stated that the book follows a list of books and papers that have been written about the YMG in Districts and the MCSA Connexion. He went on to state that this book has some differences with the other publications which are as follows:

- This book specifically narrates the history and the contribution of the old King William's Town Circuit-312.

It does that acknowledging that the organisation is broad and is spread all over the Connexion;

- Secondly, the book is based on scientific research methods which are a strict guideline;
- The third difference is that the story is mixed with experience, knowledge, and memories of the elders that were still alive in the Circuit at the time of the research. This gives credible authority and empirical evidence to the story; and
- Fourthly, this story tells the reader about the role of the YMG not only in the church, but also in the community, and to humanity at large.

Brother Zandile Jakavula, a stalwart of the YMG Connexionally, agreed that "...all people who will get the chance to read this book, especially members of the YMG, will benefit with knowledge that will empower them. The book will also empower those who want to grow in God's church."

Jakavula contended that, "Those who have been members of the YMG for years, with this book, are given a mirror to look at their journey in the organisation and reflect whether their contribution fulfills the aims of the founders of the YMG". He added that, "Those having active consciences will use the rich knowledge contained in this archive to self-correct so that they become weapons that propel development..."



Rev Z. Makula receiving a copy on the history of the YMG in the Old Circuit-312 from his Vice, Magaqa.



Rev. Z. Makula signing a copy of the book on the history of the YMG of the Old Circuit-312.



Rev. Z. Makula, V. Nyobole, F. Makananda, and V. Magxa praying for copies of book on the YMG history of the Old Circuit-312.



# SANIBONANI: THIS IS 2026, A NEW YEAR IS UPON US

By Rev. *Mike Vorster*

This is 2026, a new year is upon us. We have yet again just gone through the waves of Christmas, New Year, Matric results, back to school, moves to new Circuits, and Covenant services—A journey we embark on every year.

We stand on the brink of this new year with a sense of, “What next?”

At this juncture I have no idea what I should write in this space.

## Let me brainstorm:

Do I write about how we hate our children? We kill them year after year. More recently we are outraged at the recent accident taking the lives of many of our little ones. The outrage will soon subside and be out of mind. We blame unroadworthy vehicles, yet it will happen again sometime this year. Who really needs to take responsibility in the two nations of poor and rich, which we call South Africa? I have written many articles over the years titled: “Not another Accident”, and have offered possible solutions. Some of these articles have been published in a major newspaper. Why bother writing about this again—no one gives a hoot any way.

Do I write about the coming of the Anti-Christ of our age? Every age has had its anti-Christ dating back to the first mention of this in 1 John 2:18.

“John’s letters are the only books in the Bible to mention a figure called the anti-Christ (1 John 2:18). And in 1 John, he addresses them directly in chapters 2 and 4. In Chapter 4, John will call this same group of people ‘false prophets’ (1 John 4:1).”

A comparison between the father of end timers, Anglican priest John Nelson Darby (1800–1882), who has spawned over the years fanatical doomsday prophets like Hal Lindsay the Last Planet Earth. It could be good to juxtapose the Darbian followers in their various expression with the thoughts of outstanding theologian, the late Walter Brueggemann’s book “Out of Babylon.”

Do I write about the male push back on the freedom of women? The book and TV series ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ could give one a filter through which this can be viewed.

Do I write about the theology of suicide based on some of the research I am doing now? The second highest killer of teenagers is suicide. Even clergy and church lay leaders are not exempt.

Do I write about the strides made by the MCSA to be more integrated in comparison to secular spaces where whispers of racism and supremacy abound? Many are becoming more emboldened to express their prejudices in public. Before we know it, if we are not ultra-vigilant, we will wake up one morning to a neo-apartheid system (I have written about this over a year ago). The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord, and who will save our land and people—yes, the MCSA has the potential to give a lead within the ecumenical movement to transform our nation, we indeed can relocate to the other side—to God’s side to complete God’s project for humanity. Let’s get busy!

Do I continue to write about the spectre of autonomous weapons (this is now a reality in Ukraine, Russia, Venezuela, and Palestine, etc.)? Do I write about cyber human advances (CRISP)? I listened to a reputable podcast about the latter. I listened to a techno-scientist say that technology is so advanced that there can be implants which can enhance the health and lifespan of humans. When asked about the cost and availability of this to everyone, especially those who cannot afford this, the reply was that those without this technology will become a sub-species of Humans. I could not believe what I was hearing. We need to be very attentive to what is being said and developed in this arena. The church seems to be very silent on this issue. However, it does on occasion mention this issue in passing. Why? Watch this space—we may one day wake up, and a robot will be giving sermons. (Google this and see for yourself)

Do I write more about water accessibility in our land for everyone and how the Africa-wide Blue Community movement can inspire us to seek best-practises in local government spaces? They are there.

Do I write about ageism especially the discrimination against our supernumeraries whereby local Circuits are not allowed to use their valuable,

vast experience to assist where agency has been reduced and is unaffordable? A policy made a decade ago needs to be revisited.

Do I write about my commitment and practise of re-homing frogs as part of a commitment to eco-theology? As I write now, I have two guttural toads (they are very loud) in the ‘holding cell’ before being relocated to nearby Burman Bush. They are off to the other side where they will experience more freedom and space and will become part of the eco-cycle of life and death. At best, they will spawn the next generation of guttural toads—my pond is filled with hundreds of tadpoles, or they will become a source of food for snakes, birds, and civets. Dying so that others may live. (Is there a sermon in this?)

What do I write about at the beginning of this new year? Perhaps all or none of the above. This column remains committed to reflection on all things theologically, biblically, and spiritually.

The full title for the column is *Sanbonani, Ninjani, Out There: Spiritual And Theological Reflections About Everything And Anything*. The title was inspired by local band Mi Casa, a song which I find uplifting and optimistic. Here are the lyrics in full (google the song and sing along).

## **These Streets, by Mi Casa**

Good morning, to the world, out there  
Sanbonani, Ninjani, out there

I said good morning, to the world, out there  
Ngithi Sanbonani bo, ninjani, out there  
I need a minute, of your time  
See reflect o, not leglecto  
The things that we have in this life

These streets, that we walk upon  
These streets, that we live upon  
These streets, that we walk upon  
These streets, that we live upon  
These streets, that we walk upon

They give us, life, They give us, life  
They give us, life, They give us, life

*Continues on page 9*



Black and white, oh so bright  
All I see is beauty  
Smiles and frowns, all around  
It fills you and me  
Now I'm so convinced what we have  
Is like gold  
How we hold it and mould it  
Determines how we will grow

These streets, that we walk upon  
These streets, that we live upon  
These streets, that we walk upon  
These streets, that we live upon

They give us, life, They give us, life  
They give us, life, They give us, life

La la la la life, They give us,  
La la la la life, They give us,

La la la la life, They give us  
La la la la life, They give us

These streets, that we live upon  
These streets, that we walk upon  
These streets, that we live upon  
These streets, that we walk upon  
These streets that we live upon  
These streets that we walk upon  
These streets that we live upon  
These streets that we walk upon  
They give us, life

La la la la life, They give us  
La la la la life, La la la la life  
La la la la life, La la la la life

Songwriters: Michael Mwale, Joao Carlos Lisa Botelho Da Fonseca, Moshe Phillip Kgasoane, Sipho Philemon Mphahlaza. For non-commercial use only.



## POSITION AVAILABLE: WORSHIP LEADER (Part-time)

St John the Evangelist United Church reflects the beliefs and traditions of the Anglican, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations, shared in a warm and welcoming church community. We strive to be an inclusive church that fosters a sense of belonging, family, and fellowship, welcoming all, regardless of background, tradition, or faith perspective. We are currently looking for a:

### WORSHIP LEADER (Part-time)

In keeping with the diverse and ever-changing context of our church community, in the heart of Sandton, we are looking for a Worship Leader to establish, lead, grow, and care for our worship ministry. This role is for someone who loves Jesus, loves the church, loves worship, and can lead people both musically and spiritually.

As we will be introducing a second more contemporary service on Sundays, the Worship Leader, will work closely with the minister, multi-media team, and volunteers to help build and foster a healthy, excellent, and sustainable worship culture.

#### Who we are looking for:

- A committed Christian with a heart for worship and the local church.
- Someone who can lead teams with grace, structure, and clarity.
- A musically talented, technically competent person

who is able either to play a musical instrument, leading worship by singing, or both.

- Someone who is fluent in English and conversant in other vernacular languages like isiZulu, Setswana, and Afrikaans.
- Organised, reliable, and able to follow through.
- Someone who resides within Johannesburg with their own transport who can get to church reliably and punctually.
- Comfortable working within a team and developing people over time.
- Someone with proven prior experience in leading worship in a diverse Christian fellowship.

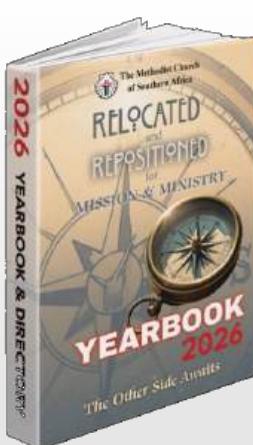
#### Preference will be given to, but not a requirement:

- Applicants who are communicant members of either of the denominations represented in St John's: Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist.
- Applicants who are skilled and knowledgeable in Graphics Design and Social Media Management (creating and posting content on the socials of the church).

#### How to apply:

Email your CV and motivation letter in support of your application to [admin@stjohnsunited.co.za](mailto:admin@stjohnsunited.co.za)

**Closing date: 06 February 2026**



## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

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# IMPORTANT DATES IN FEBRUARY

February	05	MCSA Church Funds Investment and Advisory Committee	TBA
February	05	Communications Board Meeting	MCO
February	05	Local Preachers' Department District Secretaries Consultation	Virtual
February	06–08	Connexional Children and Youth Children's Ministry Indaba	Lesotho
February	07	Boundaries Sub-Committee: Molopo Conversations	Rustenburg
February	10	Connexional Audit Committee Meeting	
February	10	Mission Unit Advisory Board Meeting	MCO
February	10	MJR Coordinators' Workshop	TBA
February	11	Ecumenical Affairs Advisory Board	MCO
February	12	Lay Training Advisory Panel Consultation	Virtual
February	12	Connexional Trust Property Committee	Virtual
February	12–14	Young Men's Guild Connexional General Executive Committee Meeting	Natal Coastal District
February	13–16	Women's Manyano Connexional Extended Executive Meeting	Northern Free State & Lesotho District
February	13	Wesley Guild Connexional General Executive Meeting	Virtual
<b>February</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	
February	19–20	Connexional Heritage Standing Committee	TBC
February	19–21	Local Preachers Association General Committee Meeting	Highveld & eSwatini District
February	24	Medical Aid Committee	MCO
February	24–25	Order of Evangelism Coordinators Consultation	eMseni
February	26	Finance Unit Investment and Advisory	Virtual
February	Feb 26–Mar 01	Connexional Women's Fellowship General Executive Committee Meeting	Central District [Maranatha]
February	27	Connexional MethSSoc Executive Assembly	Virtual

## REVISED COMMON LECTORY

Epiphany	Liturgical Colour: Green
<b>Epiphany 5A – 08 February, 2026</b>	
Isaiah 55:1-9a, (9b-12) – Psalm 112:1-9, (10) – 1 Corinthians 2:1-12, (13-16) – Matthew 5:13-20	
Lent	Liturgical Colour: Purple
<b>Ash Wednesday A – 18 February, 2026</b>	
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 OR Isaiah 58:1-12 – Psalm 51:1-17 – 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	
<b>Lent 1A – 22 February, 2026</b>	
Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 – Psalm 32 – Romans 5:12-19 – Matthew 4:1-11	
<b>Lent 2A – 01 March, 2026</b>	
Genesis 12:1-4a – Psalm 121 – Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 – John 3:1-17 OR Matthew 17:1-9	
<b>Lent 3A – 08 March, 2026</b>	
Exodus 17:1-7 – Psalm 95 – Romans 5:1-11 – John 4:5-42	
<b>Lent 4A – 15 March, 2026</b>	
1 Samuel 16:1-13 – Psalm 23 – Ephesians 5:8-14 – John 9:1-41	

## IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Michael Oppenshaw | Rev. Lebogang Jantjies

Loving, God, who brought us to birth, help us to live as those who are prepared for death.

Enable us to obey Your call to receive the baton and run the race set before us.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that You are the author and finisher of our race.

Amen

