



The Methodist Church  
of Southern Africa

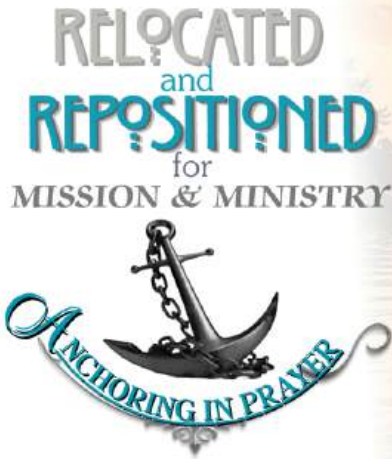
# Another Dimension

SEPTEMBER 2026



**The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**

*A Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations*



*50 Years of Ordaining Women*  
A JOURNEY OF CELEBRATION



## MESSAGE TO THE METHODIST PEOPLE: Conference 2026

The 136<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa listened carefully to the experiences, hopes, and concerns of the Methodist people. In prayer and discernment, the Conference recognised that the MCSA is called to a renewed obedience to God, a deeper commitment to mission, and a practical response to the realities facing the Church and society.

Conference paused to mourn the killings of women in Ekurhuleni and called for an urgent impartial investigations, accountability for perpetrators, and stronger prevention, protection, and support system.

Conference 2026 has affirmed a renewed strategic direction for the MCSA, centred on prayer, discipleship, and courageous service. Through this commitment, the Church seeks to nurture societies that embody faith, hope, and transformation in their communities. Through prayerful listening, discernment, and reflection, Conference identified the following priorities:

### 1. Spiritual Renewal and Anchoring in Prayer

Prayer must become the foundation of life and ministry of the church. Societies, organisations, and leaders are called to cultivate regular practices of personal and corporate prayer, spiritual discernment, and biblical reflection.

Prayer initiatives should be strengthened at every level and a culture in which decisions, programmes, and relationships are consciously placed before God.

### 2. Implementing the Mission Congress outcomes

The resolutions of Mission Congress 2025 must move from vision to action. The Church should focus on making disciples, strengthening congregational life, equipping members for ministry, and ensuring that mission is expressed through practical service in local communities.

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# Another Dimension

**EDITOR /**  
**COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**  
Bonginkosi Moyo-Bango  
[bongi@mco.org.za](mailto:bongi@mco.org.za)

**PHOTOGRAPHS**  
Supplied

**DESIGNER**  
Jenine Pretorius  
[jenine@quirkysloth.com](mailto:jenine@quirkysloth.com)

**ADVERTISING**  
[bongi@mco.org.za](mailto:bongi@mco.org.za)  
011 615 1616



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of Southern Africa

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Every structure of the Church should identify clear actions to take towards implementing the commitments of the Mission Congress. Furthermore, leaders of the Church at every level are encouraged to implement the outcomes.

## 3. Leadership, Stewardship, and Governance

The MCSA is called to invest in the formation of spiritually mature, accountable, and servant-hearted leaders. Clergy and laity must be equipped with the knowledge and skills required for effective ministry and service, governance, responsible stewardship, and faithful administration.

Leadership should be exercised with humility, transparency, and a clear commitment to the mission of Christ rather than personal interest or institutional preservation.

## 4. Women's Formation and the Jubilee Fund

As the Church celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of women's ordination, the MCSA reaffirms the full participation, leadership, and ministry of women. The Church in all its structures must address barriers that limit women's contribution and ensure that women are supported, affirmed, and equipped for ministry.

The Jubilee Fund will provide a practical means of honouring this milestone and investing in the ongoing formation and empowerment of women across the Connexion.

## 5. Youth Liberation and Empowerment

Young people are not merely the future of the Church; they are vital partners in its mission today. Guided by the vision of "Active Hope", the MCSA should create meaningful opportunities for young people to participate in worship, leadership, discipleship, innovation, and community engagement.

In responding to youth unemployment, exclusion, and discouragement, the Church must nurture young people's gifts, support their initiatives, and work with them towards lives of dignity, purpose, and hope.

## 6. Transformational Governance, Compliance, and Digital Ethics

Compliance must serve the mission of the Church rather than become an administrative burden. The MCSA is called to strengthen ethical leadership,

sound financial management, responsible use of resources, and effective institutional accountability.

As the Church engages the digital age, it must promote responsible digital citizenship, protect the dignity and privacy of people, and ensure that technology supports ministry, inclusion, and the common good.

## 7. Public Theology and Mission Enablers

The MCSA is called to remain a prophetic presence in Southern Africa. It must speak truth to power and respond faithfully to poverty, inequality, unemployment, violence, corruption, injustice, and the destruction of God's creation.

Through partnerships, advocacy, social action, and responsible use of its resources, the Church must become a visible instrument of healing, justice, and reconciliation.

## A Call to the Methodist People

The Spirit is calling the MCSA to move from maintenance to mission, from activity to fruitfulness, and from anxiety to active hope. This requires every member, Society, Circuit, District, and Connexion to discern what God is asking and to act with courage.

Anchoring in prayer, we must relocate and reposition to embody discipleship, justice, compassion, and hope. May the Holy Spirit renew and unite the Methodist people, empower her to serve God's mission faithfully in this generation.

'COME AND SEE'.



# ANCHORING IN PRAYER: Presiding Bishop Calls MCSA to Renewed Mission and Ministry

## Conference Address 2026

As the Methodist Church of Southern Africa gathers in its 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee year of women's ordination, Presiding Bishop Rev. Pumla Nzimande has called the Church to deepen its spirituality, strengthen discipleship, and continue its journey of transformation, under the theme: "Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry: Anchoring in Prayer."

Addressing Conference 2026 on 16 September, Bishop Nzimande reflected on the MCSA's journey over the past year and challenged Methodists across the Connexion to remain committed to the work of mission, healing, and transformation.

Drawing on Daniel 6:6–21 and 1 Thessalonians 5:14–19, she described the Church as a ship navigating increasingly turbulent waters and called Methodists to pause, take stock, and anchor themselves in prayer.

***"Before we set our course for the other side, let us anchor ourselves in God."***

For the Presiding Bishop, however, anchoring in prayer is not about retreating from the realities of the world. Prayer must lead to action.

***"Prayer is action!"***

She reminded Conference that Paul's call to "pray continually" in Thessalonians is preceded by a call to encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone, and pursue what is good. Prayer, therefore, should be visible in the way Christians live, serve, and relate to others.

"Prayer therefore cannot leave us unchanged," she said, calling Methodists to anchor themselves in prayer in ways that produce gratitude, humility, patience, grace, and renewed commitment to discipleship.

### The Mission Continues

Reflecting on the 2025 Mission Congress at Northfield Methodist Church, Bishop Nzimande emphasised that the Congress was not a once-off event but part of an ongoing journey of renewal and transformation.

***The Congress has ended. The mission continues.***



Four areas continue to shape this mission: Small Groups, Food Security, Economic Empowerment, and African Theologies.

She described small groups as the heartbeat of discipleship and called the Church to recover the class meeting as a foundational Methodist practice.

On food security, she highlighted the work already taking place in the Clarkebury and uPhondolwendlovu Districts, including the provision of livestock and farming implements.

***"Wherever the Church gathers, may we leave a mark; wherever we pray, may something change; and wherever we are present, may communities experience the tangible difference of our presence."***

Economic empowerment initiatives across the Connexion, including property development, job creation, and alternative revenue generation, were similarly presented as expressions of mission that respond to the economic realities facing communities.

The fourth focus, African Theologies, calls the Church to ensure that its worship and theological expression engage meaningfully with the African context.

**Celebrating 50 Years of Women's Ordination**

Conference 2026 took place during the MCSA's Jubilee marking 50 years since the ordination of women.

Bishop Nzimande honoured three pioneering women whose leadership has helped shape the Church's journey: Rev. Mavis Mbilini, the first Black woman ordained to the Order of Presbyters in 1985; Rev. Dr Purity Malinga, the first woman to serve as a District Bishop and the first woman to occupy John Wesley's seat as Chief Pastor of the MCSA; and Rev. Charmaine Morgan, the first woman to serve as General Secretary. Their contribution, she said, represents more than the attainment of leadership positions.

***"The history of women's leadership in the MCSA is not merely a history of positions attained; it is a history of courage, service, sacrifice, and the opening of doors for those who came after them."***

But the Jubilee is also a moment to look forward.

The Presiding Bishop posed difficult questions about the next 50 years, including the continued transformation of the Church, justice, dignity, and belonging for women, declining numbers of women entering and remaining in ministry, and the overt and covert forms of patriarchy that continue to shape women's experiences.

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***“Listening attentively to the lived realities of women in the MCSA and responding to what we hear will become increasingly critical as we journey into the next decade.”***

### **Calling and Enabling the Next Generation**

Bishop Nzimande made a particular appeal to young women to consider ordained Methodist ministry, proposing an intentional target of at least five women entering ordained ministry each year. She called for EMMU to develop an intentional programme to expose, encourage, and conscientise women about the vocation of ordained ministry, while emphasising that vocation must be accompanied by an environment in which women can flourish.

***“Women must not only be called; they must be welcomed. Not only ordained; but enabled to flourish. Not only enter ministry; but supported to lead.”***

This commitment will be supported by the launch of a Jubilee Bursary Fund, which will provide targeted support for women at different stages of theological formation, from Local Preachers through to doctoral studies.

***“This is more than a bursary. It is an investment in vocation, leadership, and the future of the MCSA.”***

### **Movement Is Not Arrival**

Reflecting on the MCSA's platform of work over the past year, the Presiding Bishop acknowledged the many signs of mission and transformation emerging across the Connexion—from food gardens and economic empowerment projects to youth ministry, education, community

development, and new approaches to communication. She also highlighted the growing participation of young people, including youth representation at Synod reaching 38%. Yet she cautioned the Church not to become complacent.

***“We must not mistake movement for arrival.”***

The challenge, she said, is to ensure that the signs of transformation already emerging become part of the continuing culture and practice of the MCSA.

### **A Church Navigating Stormy Waters**

Looking ahead, Rev. Nzimande acknowledged the complex realities facing communities in 2026, including inequality and insecurity, armed conflict, crime, youth unemployment, corruption, poor governance, climate change, and technological disruption. Against this backdrop, she called for a prophetic response from the Church. Using the image of the Church as a ship at sea, she urged Methodists not to abandon the vessel but to examine it, repair what is broken, and discern what must be left behind.

***“We must take time to mend what is broken, inspect the vessel, take stock of who we are becoming and what we need to leave behind, and recover our bearings.”***

She acknowledged that the Church itself is not immune to internal struggles, divisions, power contests, corruption, injustice, materialism, and the temptation to measure ministry by visibility, numbers, and possessions rather than faithfulness and fruitfulness.

The call to anchor in prayer is therefore also a call to renewal from within.

### **Recovering the Methodist Discipline of Prayer**

Rev. Nzimande challenged Methodists to revive personal and family prayer, strengthen corporate prayer, and recover the class meeting as a weekly practice of spiritual formation and accountability. She also called on the Church to strengthen discipleship among young people and within schools and universities.

In 2027, the Office of the Presiding Bishop will embark on a programme of District visits, culminating in Ubusuku Bomkhuleko—a Night of Prayer, preceded by a day of fasting and prayer. These gatherings will create opportunities for engagement with both clergy and laity and are intended to become moments of spiritual renewal, fellowship, and mission.

Returning to the story of Daniel, Bishop Nzimande reflected on the challenge of remaining faithful in a world that can exert pressure to assimilate, compromise, and conform. Daniel's decision to continue praying, even when prayer became an act of defiance, provided the central image for the Bishop's call to the MCSA. She challenged Methodists to: Pray in faith; pray in defiance about our current reality and act to denounce that which is contrary to God's purposes by being the light and salt of the earth.

***“Let the MCSA relocate and reposition for mission and ministry, anchoring in prayer as an act of faith, an act of defiance, an act of denunciation of Babylon, and through us, light will permeate!”***

## **MCSA AND EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SIGN FOOD SECURITY MOU**

The Pre-Conference 2026 Food Security Summit, convened by the Mission Unit under the leadership of the Director, Rev. Sva Wavu, met in the Clarkebury and uPhondolwendlovu Districts, represents a significant expression of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's commitment to addressing food insecurity, poverty, and the economic vulnerability of rural communities. Rooted in the biblical understanding of stewardship, human dignity, and shared responsibility, the Summit recognises food security not simply as an agricultural or economic concern, but as an integral dimension of the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation. The gathering therefore seeks to connect faith with practical action, placing the Church's land, people, networks, and resources at the service of sustainable community development.

The Summit also marks an important partnership between

the MCSA and the Eastern Cape Government, particularly through the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. This collaboration reflects a shared recognition that sustainable food security requires government expertise and resources, alongside the Church's presence, community networks, and capacity to mobilise people around a common purpose. Wesleyville, with its deep Methodist heritage, provides a fitting setting for this initiative and symbolises a new beginning in which the land, agriculture, and community enterprise can become instruments of dignity, livelihood, and renewal.

The initiative is situated within the MCSA's vision of “A Christ-Healed Africa for the Healing of Nations” and its continuing call to be relocated and repositioned for mission and ministry.

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The work undertaken in Clarkebury and uPhondolwendlovu is intended to provide a practical demonstration of how faith communities, government, and local communities can work together to strengthen food security, create opportunities for young people, support livelihoods, and build resilient

communities. In this sense, the Summit represents not merely a programme, but a shared commitment to ensuring that hunger and poverty do not have the final word, and that the resources of land, faith, and partnership can contribute to a more hopeful and sustainable future.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture in Mthatha to strengthen collaboration on joint food security initiatives.

The partnership seeks to support sustainable food production and contribute to food security and community development across the Eastern Cape.

The MoU was signed by Ms Nonceba Kontsiwe, MEC for Agriculture in the Eastern Cape, and Rev. Pumla Nzimande, Presiding Bishop of the MCSA.



## A GIFT FOR MISSION, FOOD SECURITY, AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT!

Uphondo Lwendlovu District was gifted with five cows and a bull to kick-start a dairy project as part of the Food Security Programme launched by the Mission Unit this weekend, in partial fulfilment of the imperatives of Mission Congress 2025.

This initiative seeks to translate the Church's mission into practical action by strengthening food security, supporting sustainable livelihoods, and creating opportunities for income generation.

It is hoped that, as the herd grows, the project will provide food for the community and the Church, while eventually generating income to support local ministry and development.

From mission to meaningful action—building communities that can feed, sustain, and empower themselves.



The Mission Unit launched the Food Security Summit in the Clarkebury District 1700, at the Wesleyville Circuit 1709 in collaboration with the District, the MCSA Environmental Desk, the Department of Agriculture, and the Children and Youth Unit.



# NEW WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP EXECUTIVE INDUCTED TO LEAD THROUGH ACTION

"Action Speaks Louder Than Words" was the powerful theme of the induction of the new Connexional Executive of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) Women's Fellowship, held on 9 August 2026 at the Quest Conference Centre in Vanderbijlpark.

Preaching from Acts 9:36–43, the story of Tabitha, also known as Dorcas, Presiding Bishop Rev. Pumla Nzimande called on the newly inducted leadership to place discipleship before position and service before status.

The induction took place on National Women's Day, 70 years after approximately 20,000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria in 1956 to protest against apartheid pass laws. Rev. Nzimande drew a connection between the courage of the women of 1956 and the pioneering women who entered ordained ministry in the MCSA.

The significance was heightened by the MCSA's 2026 commemoration of 50 years of women's ordination, honouring the journey that began with Rev. Constance Oosthuizen and was followed by pioneers such as Rev. Mavis Mbilini.

"Both these groupings of women—the 1956 women and pioneer women in ministry—went against the norm and

reclaimed their agency in a world that was patriarchal," Rev. Nzimande said. "They refused to be silenced. They were women of action."

She urged the new Executive to embrace the same spirit of courage, agency, and action, reminding them that leadership in the Church should not simply be about occupying a position, but about embodying the life and ministry of Christ.

Drawing on the story of Joppa, the city where Dorcas lived, Rev. Nzimande envisioned the Women's Fellowship as a place of refuge, vision, and spiritual renewal—a "harbour" where people battered by the challenges of life could find rest and be drawn closer to God.

At the centre of the sermon was the identity of Dorcas as a disciple. Before the biblical writer introduces her by name, she is described simply as "a disciple". For Rev. Nzimande, this was significant: the foundation of leadership must be discipleship.

"There must be a disciple before a position," she said, emphasising that when discipleship comes before office, leadership becomes a responsibility rather than merely a seat of authority.

Dorcas was remembered not for speeches or titles, but for her practical acts of compassion. She made clothing

for widows and served people in need. Her ministry demonstrated that even seemingly small acts can have a profound impact on those who receive them.

Rev. Nzimande therefore challenged the Executive to use their gifts, whatever their size, to bring transformation and restore dignity. "To you your gift may look small, but to the recipient—it is major," she said.

She also reflected on the meaning of Dorcas and Tabitha, both associated with the gazelle. The image became a call for the Executive to embody grace, humility, beauty of character, and purposeful action. Their leadership, she said, should be consistent both within the Church and beyond it.

Importantly, the Presiding Bishop also offered a message of care to women leaders. While encouraging them to serve faithfully, she cautioned against the expectation that women must become heroes who carry everything themselves.

"*Imbokodo* gets tired," she reminded the congregation, affirming that women leaders, too, experience fatigue, stress, and the need for care. Leadership, she said, requires recognising human limitations and trusting God rather than attempting to carry every burden alone.

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Responding on behalf of the newly inducted Executive, Mrs Emmah Welcome expressed gratitude to God, the Highveld and Eswatini District, and the Vereeniging Circuit for hosting the induction. She also thanked the Presiding Bishop for the support and “motherly love” extended to the Women’s Fellowship.

Mrs Welcome said the sermon had reminded the Executive that becoming disciples before considering their positions would provide a firm foundation for their leadership. She connected the example of Dorcas directly to the Women’s Fellowship motto: “We Love, We Care.”

The 12-member Executive, she said, recognised that each member had been blessed with different gifts which, when embraced and used together, could contribute meaningfully to the work of God.

Mrs Welcome also celebrated the women in ministry across the Connexion as the MCSA marks 50 years of women’s ordination, acknowledging their perseverance, faithfulness, and continued service despite the pressures they have encountered.

The newly inducted Executive committed itself to carrying forward the message of the induction: to become “more of Dorcas”, bringing light into people’s lives, responding to need, and serving with justice and compassion.

The call emerging from the service was therefore clear: leadership must be visible in action. As Rev. Nzimande reminded the Women’s Fellowship, “Your talk talks and your walk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.”

For the new Executive, the journey ahead is a call not simply to lead the Women’s Fellowship, but to live out its mission of loving, caring, and serving—becoming disciples before positions and allowing their actions to bear witness to their faith.

The newly inducted Women’s Fellowship Connexional Executive are:  
Emmah Welcome  
*General President*

Debrah Mohale  
*General Vice President*

Lizzy Maffoko  
*General Secretary*

Khosi Masina  
*General Statistical Secretary*

Sibusisiwe Dube  
*General Treasurer*

Masechaba Momeka  
*Finance Committee*

Lulama Ntloko  
*Finance Committee*

Juliet Mogwane  
*Spirituality Convenor*

Segametse Tebatso  
*Evangelism and Church Growth Convenor*

Alina Seabe  
*Justice, Service, and Reconciliation Convenor*

Mmule Moropa  
*Human, Empowerment, and Economic Development Convenor*

Betty Mrwebi  
*Education and Christian Formation Convenor*



# EVERY FRIDAY A CREATION DAY: A Bold Witness Towards Environmental Justice and Creation Care

A momentous and prophetic decision was taken by the MCSA Conference 2026, one that will test the church's faith and commitment to transformative mission.

In response to the escalating climate crisis and its devastating impact on vulnerable communities, Conference officially adopted a landmark resolution establishing every Friday as “**Creation Day**.” To mark this weekly observance, all Methodists are called to wear the Environmental Justice Desk pin along with green and brown attire as a visible, living sign of our solidarity with God's creation and our commitment to environmental justice.

While this decision was made in the conference hall, its true life depends on what happens in our homes, workplaces, and local churches every Friday. Wearing these colours and the pin is not merely participating in a weekly trend or putting on a uniform. We are answering a profound theological wake-up call; a call that reaches to the very heart of our identity as followers of Christ, children of the Creator, and heirs to John Wesley's legacy of social holiness.

This resolution arrives at a moment of an undeniable global crisis. As climate-related disasters accelerate destroying livelihoods, polluting watersheds, and washing topsoil, it is the rural poor, the smallholder farmer, and the marginalised who suffer first and worst. To turn a blind eye to the groaning of creation is to turn our backs on our most vulnerable neighbour.

For centuries, we have stood in our sanctuaries and confessed the Apostles' Creed: *“I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.”*

Too often, however, our actions have betrayed our words. We have treated the Earth as a static backdrop for human history rather than a living, sacred creation loved and sustained by God (Psalm 24:1). To truly believe in God as Creator is to recognise that every forest, river, and handful of soil carries divine value. Caring for the Earth is not a secular political project, rather it is an act of fundamental worship.

When we put the pin on to our chests and put on the colours of the earth each Friday, we are proclaiming a



deepened faith in the God who spoke the world into existence and declared it “very good.”

The choice of green and brown attire is deeply intentional, drawing inspiration from the South African theologian Steve de Gruchy's “Olive Agenda.”

For too long, the world has separated the “Green Agenda” (saving plants and animals) from the “Brown Agenda” (alleviating human poverty). The Olive Agenda reminds us that these two struggles are completely inseparable:

- **Brown** represents the soil, the dust from which we were made, and the rural poor who labour on degraded lands to feed their families.
- **Green** represents the flora, fauna, and ecological renewal necessary to sustain life.

By wearing both green and brown, we publicly declare that we cannot heal the poor without healing the land, nor can we care for the environment while ignoring human poverty.

As Methodists whose *raison d'être* is to spread scriptural holiness, faith that remains locked inside a church building is no faith at all. We know grace that is always active, practical, and outward-looking.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social holiness must expand to encompass the environment. Loving our neighbour practically means advocating for clean air, protecting rural watersheds, supporting sustainable farming practices (“Farming God's Way”), and resisting ecological destruction.

Wearing the pin and the colours is the starting point, not the finish line. Every Methodist congregation, Society, and

member is urged to translate this resolution into practical, daily resolve:

## 1. Wear the Colours with Purpose:

Wear your green, brown, and Environmental Justice pin every Friday. When co-workers, neighbours, or fellow parishioners ask why, use it as a testimony to explain Synod's resolution and God's love for creation and the poor.

## 2. Turn Piety into Local Action:

Transform church grounds into community gardens.

## 3. Practical Mission Projects:

At all conventions, Synods, and Conferences delegates should be encouraged to embark on a practical environmental mission such as clean up campaigns, planting indigenous trees and fruit trees.

## 4. Practice Ecological Sabbath:

Let Fridays be a day of reduced waste, conscious energy use, and intentional reflection on how our daily habits impact the Earth.

The crisis before us is urgent, but our hope is anchored in the God of resurrection and renewal. Let us honour the Conference resolution not out of mere compliance, but out of a deep, overflowing love for God and all that God has created.

Every Friday, wear the colours. Pin the badge. But above all, let your heart and hands be renewed in the service of Creator God and God's creation.



# CONFERENCE 2026 APPOINTMENTS

Conference 2026 affirmed and ratified the names of Rev. Siyabonga Mazaleni as Bishop-elect of the William Kama District, Rev. Siphiwe Madi as Bishop-elect of the Limpopo District, Rev. Luxolo Mantini as Bishop-elect of the Natal Coastal District, Rev. Vuyelwa Sebolao as Bishop-elect of the Mokala Montle District, and Rev. Festus Marumo as Bishop-elect of the Molopo District.

The first three will be inducted in 2027 and Rev. Sebolao and Rev. Festus Marumo later this year. Rev. Kholeka Gaven, who was affirmed by conference 2025, will also be inducted later this year.

May we hold them all in our prayers as they prepare to take on the mantle of leadership.



*Male Ordinands.*



*Ordinands with their Chaplains and the EMMU Director, Rev. Dr Molale*



*Ordinands 2026.*



*MCSA Bishops, Gensec, and Lay President.*



*Jubilee 2026: Female Bishops with their 4 female ordinands.*



*Female Ordinands*



*LEFT: Bishops and Lay Leaders*

# CONFERENCE 2026 BADE FAREWELL TO SOME MEMBERS



*Rev. N Sibidla, Bishop, Kumkani Hintsa District 0300 who superannuates at the end of the year.*



*Rev. M Mothupi, Bishop, Northern MCSA – Northern Free State and Lesotho District, who returns to Circuit.*



*Rev. Vuyo Dlamini, Bishop, Natal West (represented by the District Vice Chair, Rev. A Mey), who superannuates at the end of the year due to ill health.*



*Rev. Maria Mucamba-Mahota, Bishop, Mozambique District (represented by Rev. Sibongile Martha Mingana), to take early superannuation.*



*Rev. Lephoi Ntelekoa, Bishop, Mokala-Montle District 0500, who superannuates at the end of the year.*

## CONFERENCE 2026: Memorial Service

Rev. Mavis Mbilini, the first black woman to be ordained in the MCSA in 1985 led the Conference 2026 Memorial Service; a moment in which Conference pauses to remember all the ministers who have died in the Connexion since last Conference.

She reminded the congregation that in this life, we were never promised ease but that we should not let any difficulty steal our joy or defeat our spirits—because God is with us. She urged all never to give up on their faith because in the end they will find eternal rest.

"Don't lose focus—focus on our loving and unchanging God; when in Christ all battles are won!"

May the souls of our beloved ministers rest in peace and rise in glory!



**CONNECT  
WITH  
THE  
MCSA**



# SANIBONANI: Who Are You? Wheat or Weeds? (Matthew 13:24-30)

— By Rev. Mike Vorster



<sup>24</sup> Jesus told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared.

<sup>27</sup> 'The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

<sup>28</sup> "An enemy did this," he replied.

'The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?"

<sup>29</sup> "No," he answered, "because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

<sup>6</sup> Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.'

<sup>37</sup> He answered, 'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

<sup>40</sup> 'As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. <sup>42</sup> They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2026, we witnessed ordinands morph into the sacred vocation as Presbyters, and Deacons were ordained—all by the Apostolic Collective, served, represented, and led by the Presiding Bishop, Lay President, Secretary of Conference, and Presbyters through the imposition of the laying on of hands.

The weight of decades of experience and service is felt in that moment by each ordinand and Deacon. Both wheat and weeds were ordained that day, as with all in the past.

As hands were placed on each ordinand, they embarked on the journey of the ordained to Word and Sacrament and ordained to Word and Service.

On that day, both the weeds and wheat were ordained alongside each other and other ordination days before.

And there were those who were like the wheat described in the parable. And alongside these were those who were/are weeds.

All had gone through training and discernment until the time of ordination.

Well, one will ask: "Why were the weeds allowed to grow? It is not easy to spot them at the beginning as candidates." The one speculative answer could be they lied to themselves and others, coming into ministry with hazy motives.

Ordination does not vaccinate one against temptation.

The three major temptations for clergy as well as laity, is money, sex, and power. More accurately the love of money, sexual predation, and abuse of power.

In recent days, Clergy who are sexual predators have been exposed. All those who observe and do very little about sexual harassment, embezzlement of money, the abuse of power and gaslighting, are complicit.

"Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse where a person causes someone to question their sanity, memories, or perception of reality. People who experience gaslighting may feel confused, anxious, or unable to trust themselves."

The term: "gaslighting" comes from the name of a 1938 play and 1944 film, "Gaslight," in which a husband manipulates his wife into thinking she has a mental illness. Gaslighting is mainly used by those who have power.

[What is gaslighting? Examples and how to respond.](#)

## To the Weeds

Matthew 10:26: What is Hidden Will Be Exposed, "So do not be afraid of them.

There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known."

## To those who desire to produce healthy plants

Continue to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's ways of righteousness and all these things will be added to you."

Cultivate good soil.

**To those who were violated**, we are praying and stand in solidarity with you. Let us know what we can do for you. Our church has avenues of compassion to help. Our church has ways of handling predators, so also does the law of the land.

## Be Pro-active: Seek weed deterrents

Seek and surround yourself with Marigolds—they deter weeds and other pests.

[How to Use Marigolds as a Natural Pest Deterrent in Your Garden](#)

Who is a Marigold for you?

"The Lord bless you  
and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace."



# PSALM 23 REIMAGINED

— By Rev. Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu

*Theologian, storyteller, justice centred EDI specialist, author, Methodist minister, speaker.*



The Lord is my shepherd. Scarcity is not my home. He leads me towards places where my soul can breathe and brings me beside still waters. Beneath the shade of the musasa tree, I remember that my life is a gift before it is usefulness.

She restores my soul. She gathers what grief, migration, and the labour of making a life across worlds have scattered. *Munhu munhu nevanhu.* A person is a person through other people. I carry those who carried me. Their names, wisdom, and unfinished stories travel with me.

God leads me in paths of righteousness, towards places where silence protects power and Black bodies are measured against somebody else's humanity. God remembers the soil beneath our feet, who tended it, who named it, who was driven from it, and who renamed it as though history began with their arrival.

Even when I walk through the valley of death's shadow, I know something of its terrain. I have buried people I wanted to keep. Grief crosses oceans. The dead remain among the

living. God walks this road with me, and the valley will not name my destination.

She prepares a table before me in the presence of those who would have preferred me elsewhere. I know this table from my mother's world. Hands planted before we ate. Hands harvested, cooked, and served. At God's table, the woman accustomed to serving takes her place and eats.

She anoints my head with oil. My cup overflows. *Kuwanda huuya.* Abundance is found in togetherness. What fills my cup must reach another.

Surely goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life. Mercy will find me across every border. Justice will keep asking who has eaten and who is still waiting.

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. The table is laid, our names are remembered, and the door is open.

Scarcity is not my home.

God is.

## REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

| Ordinary Time                                                                                                                                                          | Liturgical Colour: Green |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Proper 23A – 11 October, 2026</b>                                                                                                                                   |                          |
| Exodus 32:1-14 OR Isaiah 25:1-9 – Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 OR Psalm 23 – Philippians 4:1-9 – Matthew 22:1-14                                                               |                          |
| <b>Proper 24A – 18 October, 2026</b>                                                                                                                                   |                          |
| Exodus 33:12-23 OR Isaiah 45:1-7 – Psalm 99 OR Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13) – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 – Matthew 22:15-22                                                       |                          |
| <b>Proper 25A – 25 October, 2026</b>                                                                                                                                   |                          |
| Deuteronomy 34:1-12 OR Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 – Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17 OR Psalm 1 – 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 – Matthew 22:34-46                                             |                          |
| <b>Proper 26A – 01 November, 2026</b>                                                                                                                                  |                          |
| Joshua 3:7-17 OR Micah 3:5-12 – Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37 OR Psalm 43 – 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13 – Matthew 23:1-12                                                            |                          |
| <b>Proper 27A – 08 November, 2026</b>                                                                                                                                  |                          |
| Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 OR Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 OR Amos 5:18-24 – Psalm 78:1-7 OR Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20 OR Psalm 70 – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – Matthew 25:1-13 |                          |

## APOLOGY AND CORRECTION

We sincerely apologise for the spelling error in the name of Rev. Constance Oosthuizen, the first woman ordained as a minister in the MCSA in 1976, in a recent edition of this newsletter.

Her name was incorrectly spelt. We regret the error and acknowledge the importance of ensuring that the names and contributions of those who have shaped the life and ministry of the MCSA are recorded accurately and with due respect.

## LOOKING AFTER OUR MENTAL HEALTH

**The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**  
*A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations*

**HEALTH DESK**  
**World Mental Health Day**

**Zoom session details**

**Date:** 12 Oct 2026  
**Time:** 18:00-20:00  
**Meeting ID:** 892 0202 6354  
**Passcode:** 172789

**Ways To Support**

- Listen without judgment and create safe spaces for honest conversation
- Encourage prayer, counselling, and professional support when needed
- Build caring communities that reduce stigma and loneliness
- Promote rest, healthy routines, and emotional check-ins

**Message**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

— Philippians 4:6-7

# WHEN VOTING IN SECRET YOU ARE STILL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

— By **Bishop Dr William Leleki**  
(Chairperson, SACC Metro)



The concept of voting in secret as we see practised today can be traced back to the earliest democratic experiments of ancient Greece and Rome.

For Christians, elections are not just another political activity, but an opportunity to discern the will of God. Casting our vote is a special moment which comes once every five years and it should be regarded as a sacred moment of deciding with God who should be entrusted with the welfare of our community, and not influenced by political rhetoric.

When we cast our votes, it is important to understand as Christians that we stand in silence alone behind the ballot booth exercising an act of faith, reflecting our commitment to God's values. Voting is not just about electing people to represent and fight for our interests. It is also an act of prayer to identify God-fearing leaders whose primary responsibility is to establish the Kingdom of God. We should encourage fellow Christians to approach the polls with the same reverence they display when worshipping.

When we cast our votes, we must be reminded of the words of the book of Proverbs; *"In their hearts human-beings plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps"* (Prov. 16:9). This verse can be understood to mean that the final outcome of the plans we make is in the hands of God. In doing God's will, there must be partnership between efforts and God's control. God wants us to use our minds, to seek advice of others, and to plan. Planning, then, helps us act God's way.

Before putting your cross on the ballot paper, ask yourself these three questions:

- Is the vote I am about to cast in harmony with God's truth?
- Will it work under real conditions?
- Is my attitude in casting this vote pleasing to God?

Elections are not just about casting a vote. We are taking an active part in shaping society for the better. When we vote, we can hold those whom we have voted accountable for acting in the interest of the community, and to

align their leadership responsibilities with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The mystery of elections raises significant theological questions, more especially when it comes to leading to a better life for all. Recognising that freedom or democracy is not based on personal merit but on God's grace. *"For you are a chosen people. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for God called you out of the darkness into God's wonderful light"* (1 Peter 2:9).

People often base their self-concept on their accomplishments. But our relationship with Christ is far more important than our jobs, successes, wealth, or knowledge. We have been chosen by God as God's very own, and we have been called to represent God to others. The time and opportunity of casting our votes must always be seen as a call to humility and gratitude to God.

Voting presents an opportunity to remember that our value comes from being one of God's children, not from what we can achieve.

While the Bible does not explicitly mention voting as it is understood today, the principles of leadership selection are present throughout the Scriptures. The Bible emphasises the

importance of wisdom and discernment in decision making or casting of our vote. *"My child, don't lose sight of common sense and discernment. Hang on to them, for they will refresh your soul"* (Prov. 3:21-22).

Casting your vote is an opportunity to exercise stewardship over the political process and to influence the direction that the leaders and communities should take in accordance with the biblical values. The Bible encourages us to uphold the rights of the poor, downtrodden, and marginalised, hence voting in the presence of God is important.

We are always encouraged as voters to acquire wisdom and seek knowledge. When casting our votes, we must make choices that honour God and contribute positively to a corrupt-free society. Every vote counts and contributes to the bigger picture of God's plan for our communities and nation.

God calls us to love our neighbour, and that is better done when voting in the presence of God. Don't just cast your vote in secret, but do so influenced by the presence of God with you behind the ballot booth.

JOIN US  
IN  
PRAYER

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA  
MABOPANE CIRCUIT 1137

**PRAYER**  
*Service*

DRESS CODE: BLACK

**SUNDAY, 11  
OCTOBER 2026**

**TIME: 9 AM**

**Led by: Rev Dr Sidwell Mokgothu**  
District Bishop and Circuit Superintendent

MT CALVARY SOCIETY  
BLOCK A, MABOPANE

# MENTOR A BOY CHILD PROGRAMME

The Young Men's Guild (YMG) ventured into new territory by pioneering the 'Mentor a Boy Child Programme', an initiative emphasising discipline, emotional intelligence, and spiritual grounding.

On Saturday, 5 September 2026, the YMG of Masakhane Circuit 1017 hosted the trailblazing event under the theme "Raising the King," with Bro. J.V.J. Makhubo serving as Programme Director. The event addressed critical social challenges hindering young boys' growth, including substance abuse, crime, mental health struggles, and the absence of positive male role models—anomalies that threaten households, schools, and a community once recognised as a beacon of unity, care, and peace.

The primary objective of the initiative is to nurture young boys and guide them toward becoming responsible men and fathers.

## Key Programme Highlights

- **Opening Devotion:** The programme commenced with a devotion delivered by Rev. Tlaleng Madibo, who drew inspiration from Ecclesiastes 12:1–2. Rev. Madibo advised the young men not to let youthfulness cause them to forget their Creator, reminding them that youth is a fleeting stage requiring purposeful stewardship.
- **Churches as Support Systems:** Setting the tone for the event, Bro. M. Mahlangu emphasised the duty of churches to offer ongoing support to young boys in their daily lives:  
*"We are here to empower, uplift, support, and assist young boys in overcoming day-to-day challenges."*

He further described the event as a vital intervention designed to break barriers and yield lasting positive outcomes for future generations.

- **Education and Discipline as Tools to Overcome Adversity:** The first keynote address was delivered by local school principal, Mr. P. Motloun. Highlighting the critical role of education in building long-term sustainability, Mr. Motloun shared a personal testimony of how strict self-discipline and continuous learning enabled him to overcome poverty. Advocating for proactivity rather than reactivity, Mr. Motloun quoted Frederick Douglass: *"It is easier to build strong children than to fix broken men."* He called on parents to model discipline at home, urged the boys to surround themselves with value-driven peers, and concluded with John Wesley's call to action:



Front row (left to right): Mr. P. Motloun, Rev. Tlaleng Madibo, and Mr. A.W. Radebe.

*"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."*

- **The Need for Male Mentorship:** Social worker Mr. A.W. Radebe delivered the second keynote address, illustrating how the mentorship programme aligns with established social welfare systems. He noted that current upbringing dynamics are predominantly female-headed, creating an urgent need for strong male mentorship in local communities. Mr. Radebe underscored the importance of developing emotional intelligence, building self-esteem, and ensuring emotional safety for children both at home and in public settings.
- **Youth Voices:** Bro. Sibusiso Mlambo and Baanetsi Moloi shared their perspectives on the value of hard work, healthy emotional expression over stoicism, and maintaining a positive attitude. The young speakers called on fathers to take an active and present role in their sons' lives.

The event concluded with a symbolic gesture by Rev. Madibo, who presented each participant with a pencil and an eraser. She explained that mistakes in life can always be erased and corrected, offering every young man the opportunity to write a better future.

A commemorative photo was taken of the participants to serve as a 10-year benchmark to track their growth into responsible manhood and "kingship."

METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA  
HIGHVELD AND ESWATINI DISTRICT 1000  
YOUNG MEN'S GUILD (YMG)  
MASAKHANE CIRCUIT 1017

THEME:  
**RAISING THE KING**  
MENTORING THE BOY CHILD

SUB-THemes  
EMOTIONALLY STRONG,  
SPIRITUALLY ANCHORED,  
SOCIALY RESPONSIBLE.

“ Know therefore that the Lord your God is God;  
he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love  
to a thousand generations of those who love him  
and keep his commandments. ”  
DEUTERONOMY 7:9  
The Young Men's Guild invites all young men,  
fathers, mentors and community members  
to be part of a powerful journey of building  
men of integrity, faith and purpose.

DATE:  
05 SEPTEMBER 2026  
(SATURDAY)

VENUE:  
GOOD HOPE SOCIETY  
IN VREDE

TIME:  
12:00 PM

MEN OF FAITH. CALLED TO BE AGENTS OF  
RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION

# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE: MCSA Conference 2026 Awards

The 2026 MCSA Conference recognised two members whose lives of service embody the Methodist calling to faith expressed through practical action: Mrs Busisiwe Grissel Kwayini of William Kama District and Mr Julian Samuel Gwambe of Natal West District.

Their journeys are different, but both demonstrate a deep commitment to serving the Church, strengthening communities, and responding to the needs of others.

## **Busisiwe Kwayini: Leading with compassion**

Mrs Busisiwe Grissel Kwayini, District President of the Women's Manyano in William Kama District, was recognised for her sustained commitment to community development and the wellbeing of vulnerable people.

A member of Perksdale Circuit and wife of Rev. Siphiwo Kwayini, Mrs Kwayini has led the Women's Manyano since 2021. Under her leadership, the organisation has undertaken a number of practical projects aimed at restoring dignity and improving the lives of vulnerable families, particularly elderly people, women, and disadvantaged communities.

These have included building an eight-cornered rondavel for an elderly Women's Manyano member in 2022, followed by fully furnished four-room houses for vulnerable families in 2023 and 2024. Despite municipal and regulatory challenges that prevented a house-building project in 2025, the organisation continued its community work and successfully built and furnished another four-room house for a needy family in 2026.

Her leadership has also promoted the wellbeing and unity of women across the District. Initiatives have included yoga and spiritual wellness programmes, netball tournaments, and an inter-District friendly match with Kumkani Hintsa District.

At the 2026 BJ Makhwenkwe Convention, the Women's Manyano distributed garden tools to three Circuits with established gardening projects, supporting food security, self-reliance, and sustainable community development.

Through these initiatives, Mrs Kwayini has demonstrated servant leadership that translates compassion into practical action. William Kama District nominated her for the Award for Excellence in Service to Church and Society in recognition of her contribution to the Church and wider community.

## **Julian Gwambe: A lifetime of service and reconciliation**

Mr Julian Samuel Gwambe's story is one of almost seven decades of service to the Methodist Church and wider community.

Born in Mozambique on 9 November 1936, Mr Gwambe grew up in a Methodist family. He joined the Young Men's Guild at Okhahlamba Circuit in 1955 and, while still at school, initiated a community outreach programme responding to the needs of people experiencing poverty.

His subsequent service to the MCSA has included serving as Superintendent of Studies, where he mentored and tutored generations of preachers, and as a Circuit Steward.

In 2001, when Circuit 810 was without a minister amid internal conflict, he helped negotiate a truce between opposing groups and served as a unifying Circuit Steward for a year, helping restore peace and stability.

He served for 12 years as Natal West District Lay Leader, with responsibility for evangelism. He became known for his ministry of presence and his quiet and persuasive approach to conflict, reconciliation, and compromise. His commitment to evangelism was also recognised through his participation in the 1981 Annual Conference, where he was District Champion of Obedience.

Mr Gwambe's service has extended far beyond the Church. During his career at SAPPI as a Personnel Officer, he initiated Adult Basic Education and Training classes in his spare time after recognising the literacy challenges faced by some workers. He also became a trusted source of support for migrant workers and others in the community.

During the political violence that engulfed Indaleni, his reputation as a non-factional community leader led to his appointment as an area manager for voting stations during the elections. He used the position to advocate for peace, at great personal cost.

His community leadership has also included serving on the Board of Richmond Chest Hospital, where he was instrumental in efforts to expand the facility into a general hospital. He has served young people through the Scout Movement and the School Governing Body of Indaleni School for the Deaf, and contributed to MCSA communications as the Natal West District correspondent for The Dimension and District press officer.

In 2026, the Natal West Young Men's Guild honoured him with a long-service award for his contribution to the Church's social responsibility work.

## **Service that makes mission visible**

The stories of Mrs Kwayini and Mr Gwambe remind the MCSA that leadership is expressed not only through positions held, but through the difference made in the lives of others.

Through community development, care for vulnerable families, education, evangelism, reconciliation, and social responsibility, their lives demonstrate how the Church's mission can become visible in the communities it serves.

The MCSA congratulates Mrs Busisiwe Grissel Kwayini and Mr Julian Samuel Gwambe on this recognition and gives thanks for their lives of faithful service to Church and society.



# ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER INTENT ON RECOMMENDING SOLAR SYSTEMS TO CIRCUIT MANAGEMENT

—By TK Sonjica

Newly appointed Environmental Officer, Lindokuhle Pikini, is intent on including in her recommendations to Circuit Management during the 2027 planning later in the year the use, among others, of solar systems in the Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit 312 properties. She was introduced to the Circuit by the Superintendent, Rev. Madodonke Ngwendu, during a special service for robing, among others, Local Preacher Mzonke Puwane on 16 August 2026.

Pikini was born and bred in King William's Town. She matriculated at Kingsridge High School for Girls in 2015. Thereafter she went to the University of the Witwatersrand where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree majoring in Politics and International Relations in 2018, and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in 2022.

Her work experience includes having worked as a Research Intern in the Executive Search Space. She has recently completed her Articles of Clerkship and is awaiting her admission as an Attorney of the High Court.

When talking to *Another Dimension*, Pikini explained that Social Justice in its entirety has always been at the centre of her academic life. She added that in her final year as an LLB student, one of her electives was Social Justice which has Environmental Justice as one of its components.

Pikini conceded that while her duties have not been outlined, she believes her key role is to assist the Circuit in ensuring that they promote ways of preserving and protecting the environment. She coupled this view by stating that this will be in line with the Methodist principle of holiness which extends to social holiness. She emphasised that taking care of God's creation is part of extending social holiness.

Giving a background which could influence her plans,

Pikini highlighted that she has come to notice that our little town (Qonce) has been facing minor floods and cited clogged drains as contributors to that. She pointed her finger towards the Municipality that has been failing for years to maintain the drainage system.

However, she reasoned that the drains become full greatly because of litter. She agreed that the town and its surrounding areas are pretty filthy.

She suggested that anti-littering campaigns should be brought back. She encouraged that drives to pick up litter around all community spaces should be considered. She further advised that it should be ensured that our societies participate in recycling programmes by acquiring recycling bins for paper, plastic, and glass. It would also be wise to partner with recycling centres in neighbouring areas.

Among other strategies, Pikini was supportive of promoting Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (RRR) programmes and subsistence farming within our societies.

Pikini is convinced that subsistence farming would not only promote the production and consumption of food with low chemical use, including concerns relating to genetically modified food, but would also directly benefit members of our Circuit by contributing towards food security.

In the longer term, she insisted that the initiative has the potential to extend those benefits to members of the communities surrounding our Circuit. She continued and stated that, "Subsistence farming would therefore have a more direct and meaningful impact on our members and the surrounding communities, particularly in addressing food security and encouraging the production of healthier food".

"The Circuit has to be convinced to be paperless in hosting conventions or synods or conferences. Therefore, we should refrain from print-outs and opt to utilise soft copies of the reports", she made her concluding remarks.



*LEFT: Lindokuhle Pikini listens attentively as Rev. Mdodonke Ngwendu advises her on her role and responsibilities as an Environmental Officer of the Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit.*



*Circuit 312 Superintendent Rev. Mdodonke Ngwendu attaching the pin badge as an Environmental Officer of Circuit 312 to Lindokuhle Pikini.*



*Lindokuhle Pikini shakes hands with Circuit 312 Wesley Guild Vice President, Anga Tshatsha, at a special service at the Rev. VGK Ntshinga Society in Zwelitsha.*



*Women's Manyano President, Ms Buyiswa Ngwendu congratulating Lindokuhle Pikini after being introduced by Rev. Madodonke Ngwendu as Circuit 312's Environmental Officer.*

# WHEN A DISTRICT RAISES ITS HAND: 100 Trees Take Root In Lekwa-Temane

—By *Tebogo Oepeng (Environmental Justice Desk)*

Environmental Justice Desk responds to a request from the District Mayor's Office.

**DR RUTH SEGOMOTSI MOMPATI DISTRICT, NORTH WEST —**

Sometimes environmental action begins with a simple request: "We need trees."

In this case, the request came from the Office of the Acting District Mayor of Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti District Municipality, seeking support to strengthen environmental greening across the District.

Following discussions, it was decided that the initiative would commence in Lekwa-Temane Local Municipality, where more than 100 indigenous trees were planted at different schools, churches, and public spaces on 17 September 2026. But this is only the beginning.

The Lekwa-Temane intervention forms part of a broader District-wide environmental initiative that will progressively extend to the other local municipalities falling under the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti District Municipality. The programme will eventually reach communities, schools, churches, and public spaces across the District, with the current planting journey culminating in Christiana Township.

For the Environmental Justice Desk (EJD) of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, this request represents more than an opportunity to plant trees. It is an opportunity to respond to communities through practical environmental action, partnership, and delivery.

**A District with a Strong Agricultural Heartbeat**

Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti District is predominantly rural, with communities whose livelihoods and daily lives remain closely connected to the land, agriculture, and natural resources.

Lekwa-Temane, which includes the towns of Bloemhof and Christiana, provides a fitting starting point for an initiative centred on environmental responsibility.

In such communities, planting trees is not merely about beautifying public spaces. It is about creating healthier surroundings, providing shade, protecting green spaces, and encouraging people—particularly young people—to understand their responsibility towards the environment.

The municipality itself demonstrated that environmental awareness is taken seriously. Clean and well-maintained public areas are complemented by visible warning and awareness messages reminding residents about environmental responsibility. Because awareness is key, the message is clear: people cannot protect what they do not understand or appreciate.

"We Cannot Afford to Neglect Our Environment." The Acting District Mayor, Cllr. Lydia Duiker, who also serves as Chairperson of the Climate Change portfolio, did not mince her words when addressing the importance of environmental care. She emphasised that communities must take responsibility for their surroundings and understand the consequences when people fail to care for and protect the environment.

Reflecting on her own school days, Cllr. Duiker recalled a time when young people were passionate about their environment and environmental

matters formed part of their learning and school curriculum. Her reflection carries an important lesson for the present generation: environmental education should not only appear during special campaigns or commemorative days. It should help young people understand the relationship between people and nature, and the responsibility they carry for the communities and environment they will inherit.

A tree planted at a school, therefore, becomes more than a tree. It becomes a living lesson. It provides learners with an opportunity to observe growth, understand care and responsibility, and appreciate the value of a healthy environment.

The initiative also supports the national call for increased tree planting and greening under the Presidential 10 Million Trees Campaign, bringing a national environmental message directly into communities.

**A Relationship That Came Full Circle**  
At Boitumelong Primary School, the tree-planting programme carried a particularly meaningful human story.

Mrs. Mandu Dlamini, founder and principal of the school since 2008, warmly acknowledged Cllr. Duiker and the relationship they have built over the years.

Their paths first crossed in 2008, when Cllr. Duiker served as a member of the school's School Governing Body (SGB). Eighteen years later, they stood together again at the same school—but now in different roles. One is serving as Acting District Mayor and Chairperson of Climate Change, while the other is the founder and principal of the school she has helped build since 2008.

*Continues on page 18*



*LEFT: Mrs Mandu Dlamini, Principal of Boitumelong Primary School and learners.*



*RIGHT: All hands on deck—municipal officials also being part of the tree planting.*



ABOVE: Municipal officials during the tree planting.  
RIGHT: Acting District Mayor of Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti, Cllr. Lydia Duiker, all hands on deck.



Yet the purpose remained the same: serving the community and creating a better environment for its children.

It was a powerful reminder that community relationships may change with time and responsibility, but the commitment to serving people can remain constant.

Mrs. Dlamini welcomed the trees and committed the school to caring for and protecting them. She highlighted the practical benefit they will bring to learners, including the much-needed shade as the trees mature.

Her commitment also recognised a fundamental principle of environmental justice: Planting is only the beginning. The real responsibility is ensuring that the tree survives.

### **Trees That Carry a Message of Unity**

The spirit of unity was also reflected in the way the newly planted trees were received at different points of the programme.

At the Lekwa-Temane Local Municipality offices, one of the trees was named Cllr. Sebang Moses Motlhabi, Mayor of Lekwa-Temane Local Municipality, in his absence. At Boitumelong Primary School, another tree was named after Cllr. Motseothata Alpheous Maji, also in his absence.

Both councillors were engaged outside the jurisdiction on the day, but their absence did not prevent the communities present from recognising their respective roles in the local leadership landscape.

The naming of the trees carried a simple but meaningful message: environmental action can create space for unity, recognition, and a shared commitment to community development.

The trees therefore became more than plants placed in the ground. They

became living symbols of a community choosing to look beyond individual presence and circumstances, and to focus on the common responsibility of building a greener environment. In that sense, the planting programme demonstrated that unity can take root in unexpected places.

### **Learners, Trees, and a Little Rain**

The planting at Boitumelong Primary School produced one of the day's most memorable scenes. As learners gathered around the newly planted trees, a gentle drizzle began to fall. But the rain did not dampen their enthusiasm. Instead, the learners celebrated the moment with excitement and jubilation, embracing their role as young environmental champions.

There was something symbolic about children planting trees while rain gently fell around them. The earth received the trees, the children received a lesson, and the rain became part of the story.

The moment demonstrated that environmental awareness does not have to be complicated. Sometimes it begins with young hands placing a tree into the soil and making a commitment to look after it.

### **A Partnership That Makes Delivery Possible**

The Environmental Justice Desk acknowledges that this intervention would not have been possible without the support of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) through its Forestry Greening and Livelihoods Implementation Support Unit. Special appreciation goes to Ms. Aneliswa Mbunge, the responsible official in the North West Province, for her assistance and support in making the trees available.

This partnership demonstrates the value of collaboration between government, municipalities, schools, churches, and communities. Each

partner brings something different, but the objective is shared: to create greener, healthier, and more environmentally conscious communities.

For the EJD, this is precisely what environmental justice requires—not merely awareness, but partnership translated into action.

### **When a Community Raises Its Hand, We Respond**

The Lekwa-Temane initiative is significant for another reason. The request came from the District Mayor's Office, after efforts to acquire trees had proved challenging. Rather than allowing the need to remain unanswered, the Environmental Justice Desk responded positively. This makes Lekwa-Temane the first point of implementation in what is intended to become a wider District environmental initiative.

The message is simple: When communities and municipalities raise their hands, environmental justice must respond. Lekwa-Temane is therefore not the destination. It is where the journey begins.

From schools to churches, from public spaces to townships, the roots of this partnership will continue spreading across the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti District, one municipality and one community at a time.

And as the learners of Boitumelong Primary School stood celebrating their newly planted trees in the gentle rain, they reminded everyone present of something fundamental: *A greener future does not begin tomorrow.*

*It begins with what we plant, protect, and nurture today.*

Environmental Justice = Partnership + Action + Delivery.

And in Lekwa-Temane, the roots of that partnership have now been planted.

# IMPORTANT DATES IN OCTOBER

|         |       |                                                              |                         |
|---------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| October | 08    | Revisions Standing Committee Meeting                         | Virtual                 |
| October | 08    | EMMU – Superintendents' Refresher Course                     | Virtual                 |
| October | 09    | EMMU: DSS, IST and School of Vocation Training               |                         |
| October | 09-11 | Order of Evangelism Warden visit SMMS                        |                         |
| October | 10    | Connexional Music Association Eisteddfod                     | Central District        |
| October | 12-16 | Order of Evangelism Training                                 | eMseni                  |
| October | 13    | Connexional Audit Committee Meeting                          |                         |
| October | 13    | Mission Unit Advisory Board Meeting                          | MCO                     |
| October | 14    | Ecumenical Affairs Advisory Board Meeting                    | MCO                     |
| October | 14    | Connexional Standing Commission On Ministers Without Station | Virtual                 |
| October | 15    | MCSA Church Funds Investment & Advisory Committee            | TBA                     |
| October | 15    | Africa Methodist Council Women's Movement                    |                         |
| October |       | International Day of Rural Women                             |                         |
| October | 15-17 | Order of Evangelism Warden Visit Mozambique                  |                         |
| October | 15-18 | Connexional Wesley Guild Triennial Convention                | TBA                     |
| October | 17-18 | Local Preachers Association Presidents Meeting               | TBA                     |
| October | 20    | Connexional Unit Leaders' Meeting                            | MCO                     |
| October | 21    | Connexional Gender Justice Task Team                         | Virtual                 |
| October | 21    | Supernumerary Pension Fund Meetings                          | Virtual                 |
| October | 21-22 | Lay Training Advisory Panel Consultation                     | eMseni                  |
| October | 22    | Lay Staff Pension and Provident Fund Meeting                 | Virtual                 |
| October | 22-25 | Women's Manyano Connexional CCS Workshop                     | Kumkani Hintsa District |
| October | 23-26 | Young Women's Manyano CCS Workshop                           | Limpopo District        |
| October | 25    | JDDJ Commemorative Service                                   |                         |
| October | 25    | Ecumenical Reformation Sunday                                |                         |
| October | 27-29 | WiM Consultation, 50 Years Celebration of Women in Ministry  |                         |
| October | 28    | Methodist Publishing Committee                               | Virtual                 |
| October | 29    | Synergising the Orders Meeting                               | Virtual                 |

## IN MEMORIAM

**Rev. Brenda Leigh Timmer**  
**Rev. Mongameli Nkwandla**

*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.*

