The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Another Dimension

OCTOBER 2026



SHE SAID YES TO THE CALL: Jubilee 2026

The 50th anniversary of the ordination of women afforded an opportunity for many of the ordained women in the MCSA to meet together to reflect on the journey thus far. We took time to remember the stories and lives of women who have served this institution from the first moment that women were accepted into the ordained role. They were stories of struggle but also of great joy to have discovered the privilege of saying yes to God. There was an excitement generated by these stories and we were working together in an environment where we were encouraged to 'abandon' protocol—hierarchy had no place within the sisterhood.

The reality for Women in Ministry is that we are living in the space between what was and what will be. We pray 'thy kingdom come' and live in the liminal space of realised eschatology. Women are accepted into the ordained ministry of the MCSA but are we welcomed? The stories of struggle, exclusion, and hurt still continue. The space we inhabit is still filled with tension and danger. The 'brutal and raw' sexism of the early years has been repackaged and replaced by something more subtle, perhaps even more sophisticated.

So, we have learned to tread lightly, to walk on eggshells in the house of God. We continue to carry pain and anger, the quiet trauma of being tolerated and not embraced, the distress of rooms where we are present and invisible, the unease of corridors where we are not safe. The patriarchy here is not loud. It is subtle, polite, and smiling.

But we are women ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament and our call will not be denied. It is our primary obedience, and the 'powers' that seek to deny or minimise it are seeking to subvert God's will and way. That will and that way is not simply about mimicking the role as it has been performed until now. God's will and way is about inclusion, authentic personhood, relationships of mutual respect. Hierarchy does not serve that goal—its aim is to inform us about power. As a church, we need to revisit our relationship with responsibility and power. Within a patriarchal system, power is currency, and so, as a church, we have divided into silos where we can secure our power, and this creates a system where cooperation is not guaranteed.

Therefore, we are committed to deepening our relationships with one another, both formally and informally. We are committed to broadening our knowledge and understanding of both the theologies that oppress and the

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Another Dimension

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theologies that free, so that we will be granted the wisdom to know which battles to fight. We are engaged in a battle with powers and principalities which in itself uses and abuses people. Our calling is to bring God's hope and healing to a broken world. The work we have been doing is building on the work of our sisters (e.g., the 2016 Charter)

We give thanks to God for this opportunity to meet, share our stories, heal our wounds, support our sisters, dream for the future, and seek to fulfil God's calling on our lives.

Let us remember both; the bruises and the blessings, the wounds still tender and the grace still holding us.

We were here.
We were faithful.
We were seen by God,
Even when we're not seen by all.

We are here.
We are faithful.
We are seen by God,
even when we are not seen by all.

BACK TO BETHEL: MCSA Celebrates 210 Years Of Methodism In Namaqualand

A historic homecoming of faith, remembrance, and renewed commitment to mission and ministry.



The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) celebrated 210 years of Methodist witness in Namaqualand with a weekend of thanksgiving, pilgrimage, historical reflection, and renewed commitment to mission and ministry from 23-25 October 2026. Held at Leliefontein and Bethelsklip in the Cape of Good Hope District, the celebrations brought together church leadership, clergy, laity, young people, and members of the Namaqualand community to honour a remarkable legacy of faith that began in 1816.

Under the theme "Back to Bethel—Terug Betel toe", the anniversary invited the Church to remember its spiritual foundations, reclaim its sense of purpose, rebuild relationships and structures, and rejoice in God's faithfulness across generations. The celebration also resonated with the MCSA's Connexional theme, "Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry: The Other Side Awaits," and the Conference 2026 sub-theme, "Anchoring in Prayer."

A Story That Began With An Invitation
The story of Methodism in Namaqualand is one of providence, courage, partnership, and the determination of a community seeking a deeper encounter with God.

In 1816, Namaqua Chief Jaantjie (Jantjie) Wildschutt and five elders set out in search of someone who could teach their people about the "Great One in the Sky". On 4 October 1816, while travelling near the Olifants River, they encountered Methodist missionary Rev. Barnabas Shaw and his wife, Jane Shaw, who were journeying inland. Chief Wildschutt invited them to accompany him to Namaqualand, where they would establish a Methodist witness among his people.



The Shaws accepted the invitation and travelled with the Namaqua party to the Kamiesberg. Barnabas Shaw preached his first sermon to the community at Bethelsklip before arriving at Leliefontein on 23 October. The first Sunday Methodist service was held there on 25 October 1816. What began as a small gathering in a community grew into Leliefontein Mission, recognised as the oldest continuing Methodist mission station in Southern Africa. Over the generations, the mission became much more than a centre for preaching. Its contribution extended to education, agriculture, health, community development, spiritual formation, and the dignity and welfare of the people.

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The anniversary therefore celebrated not simply the arrival of missionaries, but also the agency, hospitality, faith, and contribution of the Namaqua people who welcomed and sustained the Methodist witness.





Walking The History: A Pilgrimage Through Sacred Places

The celebrations opened on Friday, 23 October, at Leliefontein, with welcomes and opening messages from Circuit and District leadership, followed by the official opening by the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande. The programme included youth activities, an opportunity to celebrate 50 years of women's ordination in the MCSA through the Women in Ministry (WIM) Jubilee, and reflections by clergy on the 210-year journey of the Namaqualand Mission.

Saturday, 24 October, was dedicated to a historical and spiritual pilgrimage through the communities and places that form part of the mission's story. Beginning at Bethelsklip, participants travelled through Kharkams, Kameelsboom, Tweerivier, and Langvlei before making their way back to Leliefontein. At each stop, participants were introduced to the historical and community significance of the location. Opportunities to walk sections of the route provided a physical experience of the landscape through which generations had travelled, worshipped, worked, and built their communities.

The day also offered an opportunity to celebrate Namaqualand's rich cultural heritage through storytelling, traditional singing and dancing, a Namaqua kraal photobooth and a historical gallery display. These activities brought together memory, culture, and fellowship, reminding participants that the story of the mission belongs to the communities whose lives have shaped it.





Remembering The Martyrs And Those Who Suffered

An important part of the anniversary was the commemoration of those who lost their lives in the service of the Gospel and in defence of their community. The church remembered the martyrdom of Rev. William Trelfall, Rev. Jakob Links, recognised as the first South African indigenous Methodist minister, and Evangelist Johannes Jager. The three were murdered on the night of 10 August 1825 while undertaking missionary work from Namaqualand towards the Fish River.

Participants also remembered the people massacred at Leliefontein Mission Station during the South African War on 31 January 1902, when forces under General Maritz attacked the community. Memorial plaques were unveiled in honour of the Methodist martyrs and those who perished in the Leliefontein massacre. These memorials serve as important markers of remembrance, ensuring that the sacrifices and suffering associated with the mission's history are not forgotten.

The commemorations were also an opportunity to reflect on the complexities of the mission's history and the responsibility of the present generation to preserve its memory with honesty, dignity, and respect.





Honouring 50 Years Of Women's Ordination

The 210th anniversary coincided with the MCSA's Jubilee celebration of 50 years of women's ordination. The occasion provided an opportunity to recognise the women who have faithfully served as ministers in the Namaqualand Mission Circuit and to celebrate the wider contribution of women to the life and ministry of the Church.

The Women in Ministry celebrations honoured the courage, perseverance, and ministry of clergywomen whose service has helped shape the MCSA across generations.

The two anniversaries offered an important opportunity to connect the Church's historical journey with its continuing commitment to equality, recognition, and the full participation of women in ministry and leadership.





From Pilgrimage Stones To A Pulpit Of Renewal

One of the significant highlights of the weekend was the planting of a commemorative tree by the Presiding Bishop, assisted by a young boy from the community. The symbolic act connected the generations, representing the responsibility to preserve the story of Namaqualand Methodism and pass its heritage on to children and young people.

The Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, and the District Bishop, Rev. Yvette Moses also participated in the dedication of a new pulpit constructed from stones collected from across the Cape of Good Hope District during the Pilgrimage of Renewal towards Mission Congress 2025.

The stones represented Circuits, organisations, and, in some instances, individuals from across the District.

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Brought together at Bethelsklip, they became a powerful symbol of unity, shared responsibility, and the Church's collective journey of renewal. The pulpit stands as a monument to this pilgrimage and a reminder that renewal is not the responsibility of one leader or one congregation, but a shared calling involving the whole Church.

"Return To Your First Love": The Presiding Bishop's Message
The weekend culminated on Sunday, 25 October, with a celebration service at Bethelsklip, the very place where Barnabas Shaw preached to the Namaqua people 210 years earlier.

Preaching from Genesis 35:1–7 under the theme "Relocating and Repositioning Towards Bethel," the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, called the church to return to its spiritual foundations and rediscover its first love.

Drawing parallels between Jacob's return to Bethel and the MCSA's 210-year journey, she observed that the Church, like Jacob, had travelled through different seasons of growth, struggle, achievement, and challenge. Yet, at this significant moment in its history, it was being called to return to the place of encounter with God.

The Presiding Bishop reminded the congregation that Bethel represents the house of God and a place of spiritual awakening. Returning to Bethel, she emphasised, was not simply about revisiting a geographical location or celebrating the past. It was about renewing the Church's relationship with God and recommitting itself to the mission for which it was established.

She identified four important preparations in Jacob's journey that remain relevant to the Church today: putting away idols, purifying oneself, changing one's garments, and building an altar to God. The call to put away idols challenged the Church to confront materialism, pride, the pursuit of power, status, and the desire to please people at the expense of faithfulness to God. The call to purification and changed garments emphasised the need for integrity between what the Church professes and how it lives. Finally, building an altar represented the renewal of personal and collective commitment to God.

The Presiding Bishop challenged the church not to become spectators of its own spiritual heritage, but active participants in God's continuing mission. Reflecting on the pilgrimage to Bethelsklip, she noted that participants had experienced the challenges of the journey, with some walking further than anticipated. Yet, despite different levels of difficulty, they continued together towards the destination.

Her message was clear: the journey of faith is not always easy, and people may experience it differently, but the Church must remain committed to moving forward together. She called on the Namaqualand Circuit, the District, and the entire Connexion to return to being a Church that serves Christ and the world, does good, does no harm, and stays in love with God.

A Call To Reclaim, Rebuild, and Rejoice
In reflecting on the anniversary, the Circuit Superintendent, Rev. David Velile Khonza, explained that the celebration emerged from a wider process of reflection and renewal within the Namaqualand Mission Circuit.

Since his arrival in January 2025, he had been struck by the extraordinary hospitality of the people and the rich historical heritage of the Circuit. However, conversations and reflection during a Circuit Bosberaad also brought attention to challenges involving weakened structures, neglected responsibilities, and the need to revitalise the mission of the church. The questions guiding the renewal process were fundamental: Who are we as a Circuit? Where have we dropped the ball? What must we reclaim and rebuild?

The theme "Back to Bethel" emerged as a call to return to the Circuit's original sense of purpose and rediscover its identity as a historic centre of Methodist mission.

The renewal process draws inspiration from Barnabas Shaw's own understanding of shared ministry. In 1826, he wrote that the work of instructing the population could not be left to ministers and missionaries alone, but required every professing Christian to play their part. This understanding resonates with the Methodist principle of the priesthood of all believers and the need to empower congregations and communities to take responsibility for mission.

The Circuit's renewal vision therefore extends beyond commemorating history. It seeks to rebuild relationships within the Church and with surrounding communities, strengthen structures, restore neglected responsibilities, and renew the moral and spiritual life of society.





Looking Towards The Next Generation
As the Namaqualand Mission Circuit marked 210 years of Methodist witness, the anniversary was both a celebration of an extraordinary heritage and a challenge to the present generation.

The story of Chief Jaantjie Wildschutt, Barnabas and Jane Shaw, the Methodist martyrs, the Leliefontein community, generations of ministers, and the many women, young people, and children who have sustained the mission reminds the Church that its history has been shaped by many hands and many acts of faith.

The weekend closed with gratitude for those who had gone before, renewed relationships among those gathered, and a call to carry the mission forward. The challenge of "Terug Betel Toe" is ultimately to return to God, reclaim the Church's calling, and rebuild a community of faith whose witness is evident not only in its preaching, but also in its service, relationships, and commitment to the well-being of society. As the MCSA looks towards the next generation, the 210th anniversary of Namaqualand Mission stands as a reminder that the flame kindled in 1816 must continue to burn brightly.

We give thanks for the past, we embrace the responsibility of the present, and we move forward in faith towards the future.

Back to Bethel. Anchored in prayer. Repositioned for mission and ministry.

ST PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH MARKS 100 YEARS OF FAITH WITH A CALL TO NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The centenary celebrations of St Paul's Methodist Church in Manzini were marked by thanksgiving, reflection, and a renewed call for the church to play a greater role in the spiritual, social, and economic transformation of Eswatini.

St Paul's Methodist Church in Manzini celebrated 100 years of Methodist mission and ministry from 2–4 October 2026, bringing together church leaders, clergy, congregants, government representatives, and ecumenical partners to honour a century of service and look towards the next 100 years. The Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande led the church dedications and services. The celebrations were attended by Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini, who challenged the Methodist Church to use its centenary as a platform for renewed spiritual commitment and greater involvement in national development.

Addressing the congregation during the centenary service, the Prime Minister paid tribute to generations of worshippers, ministers, teachers, and evangelists whose dedication had sustained the Church over the past century. He noted that Methodism, introduced through the work of early missionaries, had developed deep roots in Eswatini and become a Church led by emaSwati and actively involved in the nation's spiritual and social development.

Looking ahead, he urged the Church to strengthen its partnership with Government in advancing education, economic empowerment, and job creation. He challenged the Methodist community to equip young people not only to seek employment but also to create opportunities, build businesses, and contribute to economic transformation. He emphasised that while Government could provide infrastructure and services, institutions such as the Church had an equally important responsibility to build character, integrity, and patriotism.

"The Church of Jesus Christ was never called to entertain society; it was called to transform society," he said, calling on ministers, leaders, and families to renew their commitment to prayer, discipleship, and spiritual formation.

A Vision For The Next 100 Years
The centenary Gala Dinner offered an opportunity to reflect on the history of Methodism in Eswatini and consider its future role.

The keynote speaker, Rev. Prof S Kumalo, traced the development of Methodism in the Kingdom from its beginnings in the 1800s to the present day. Looking towards the next century, he challenged the Church to consider whether its members would become self-centred individuals, people confined to familiar ideas, or responsible citizens who recognise their value and their responsibility towards others.

He called for a Church that actively confronts poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence, and substance abuse, while promoting Ubuntu and a sense of shared responsibility for community wellbeing.

The Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, gave the congregation a fivefold charge to carry beyond the celebrations: *Thandanani* (love one another), *Thembekani* (be faithful), *Thintelekani* (be accountable and open to correction), *Thobekani* (be humble), and *Thumekani* (be sent to serve).

The message was a reminder that the next century must be characterised not only by growth but also by Christian love, humility, faithfulness, and service.

A Church Anchored In Prayer And Strengthened By The Spirit
The celebration service, led by the Presiding Bishop, further challenged the Circuit to prepare spiritually for the next century of ministry. Drawing on Psalm 121 and Ephesians 6:10–20, her message centred on the conviction that victory is not found in human strength alone, but in the Spirit of God.

Under the call, "Victory is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit", the congregation was encouraged to recognise the limitations of human strength and to depend more deeply on God. The message called on the Church to put on the full armour of God: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God.

The congregation was also reminded of the importance of perseverance. Referring to Paul's instruction in Ephesians to stand firm after doing everything possible, the message encouraged believers not to surrender when confronted by difficulties, disappointment, or unanswered prayers. Instead, they were called to remain steadfast, prayerful, and grounded in faith.

The challenge to "raise the volume of light" as the forces of darkness increase became a memorable call to action. The Church was urged to respond to the challenges of society not through hostility towards people, but through prayer, truth, justice, righteousness, and faithful Christian witness.

Three Church Dedications Mark Continued Growth
The centenary programme also included the dedication of three church buildings in the Central Eswatini Circuit.

On 2 October, Rev. Nzimande dedicated Sigombeni Methodist Church, encouraging the congregation to place God at the centre of its worship and life. She reminded members that the Church is ultimately found in the hearts of believers and cautioned against limiting the work of the Holy Spirit.

On 3 October, she dedicated Hlutse Methodist Church, supported by Highveld and Eswatini District Vice-Chair Rev. Vika, and Central Eswatini Circuit Superintendent Rev. Ndumiso Ncombo, together with other ministers.

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The dedication recognised the sacrificial contributions of community members Sipho Mkhonta, who undertook construction work at the cost of his transport expenses, and Musa Fakudze, who contributed his welding skills as an offering towards the project.

The Ngwane Park Methodist Church was also dedicated, with Rev. Nzimande drawing from Colossians 3:15–17 to encourage the congregation to restore the Church's mission pillars and strengthen its commitment to prayer. She challenged members to move beyond being spectators and commentators to becoming active participants and initiators in God's mission.

Passing The Baton To A New Generation

One of the memorable moments of the celebrations was the cutting of the centenary cake, assisted by Rev. Vuyokazi May. Two teenagers were symbolically served, representing the passing of the baton to a new generation that will carry the Church's mission into the next century.

The celebrations concluded with the unveiling of a centenary memorial plaque in the presence of the Prime Minister and church leadership, providing a lasting tribute to the generations whose faith and sacrifice built the Methodist witness in Eswatini.

As St Paul's Methodist Church entered its second century, the celebrations served as both an acknowledgement of the past and a challenge for the future. The messages from Church and Government leadership were united in calling for a church that remains spiritually grounded while actively contributing to the transformation of society.

The next 100 years will therefore require more than preserving a proud history. They will demand a church that nurtures future leaders, empowers communities, confronts social challenges, and continues to serve with humility and purpose.

Ebenezer – Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. A century of faithfulness celebrated; a new century of mission begins.



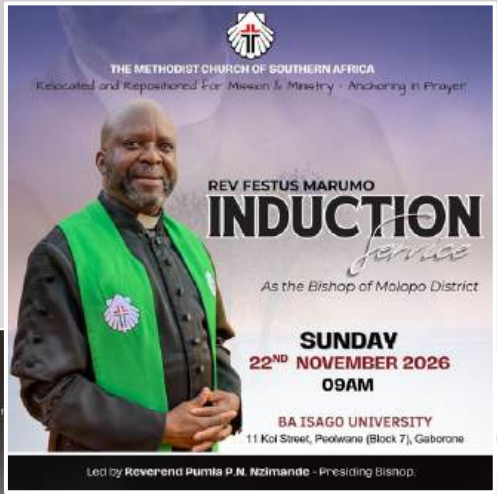


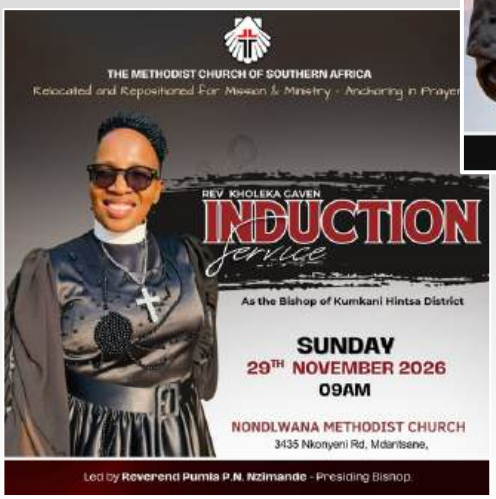


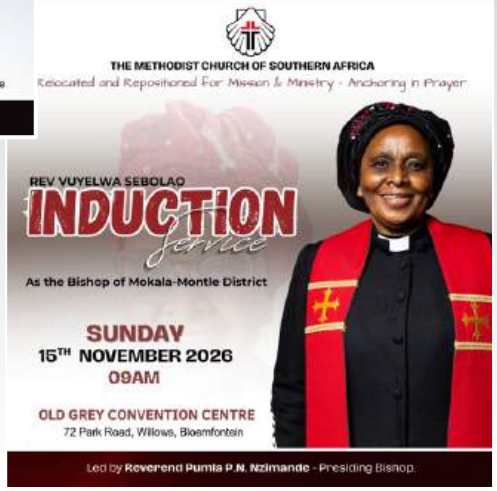




UPCOMING SERVICES







INTAKA METHODIST CHURCH DEDICATED IN MOZAMBIQUE: A Call To Fix Our Eyes On God And Find Hope

The Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande, has called on the Intaka Methodist Church in the Mavalane Circuit, Mozambique District, to become a beacon of hope in its community, offering a place of prayer, spiritual renewal, and encouragement amid life's challenges.

The call was made during the dedication of the new Intaka Methodist Church building, a significant milestone for the Mavalane Circuit and the wider Mozambique District. Joining the congregation in worship, Rev. Nzimande congratulated the District leadership, the Circuit, and the Intaka Society on completing the building, praying that the church would continue to be "the light of the world and the salt of the earth".

Preaching from Isaiah 45 under the theme "Fix Your Eyes on God and Find Hope in Hopelessness", the Presiding Bishop reflected on the circumstances of the Jewish people during their exile in Babylon. Faced with oppression, displacement, and uncertainty, they were reminded that their circumstances did not signal the end of God's purposes. God remained sovereign, and there was still hope.

Drawing parallels with contemporary society, she challenged the church to remain a source of hope in communities confronting poverty, unemployment, violence, social injustice, and spiritual uncertainty.

"Where people have lost hope, we must continue to be captives of hope and call them into the light," she urged, reminding the congregation that the church is called to offer refuge, guidance, and an encounter with God.

The Presiding Bishop highlighted four assurances from Isaiah 45 that should shape the life and witness of the Intaka congregation.

First, she reminded members that God goes before them. Just as God promised to level mountains, break down gates of bronze, and cut through bars of iron, so God remains able to overcome the obstacles and systems that hold people captive. She encouraged the congregation not to lose hope in the face of difficulties, including unforgiveness, hatred, poverty, and financial hardship, trusting that no season of suffering lasts forever.

Second, she emphasised that God gives undeserved gifts. Even in difficult circumstances, God's mercy, grace, and strength remain available. Through prayer and a life of holiness, believers discover God's goodness even amid uncertainty. She encouraged the Intaka Society to seek God continually and draw strength from the gifts that come through a relationship with Him.

Third, she reminded the congregation that God calls each person by name. Being called children of God is both a privilege and a responsibility. Christians are therefore called to reflect God's character by loving as God loves, serving as Christ served, and giving generously. She challenged members to nurture healthy relationships with one another and with the wider community, ensuring that their lives reflect the God whose name they bear.

Finally, she affirmed that there is none like God. The congregation was urged to keep its attention firmly on God rather than allowing possessions, positions, personal ambitions, or worldly distractions to take His place. The church must remain a place where people encounter the living God and find strength to face the challenges of life.

The dedication was attended by the Acting Bishop of the Mozambique District, Rev. Arlindo Muduma, the District Lay Leader, Mr Samuel Magaia, the Mission Unit Director, Rev. Sva Waqu, former District Bishop, Rev. Dinis Matsolo, Methodist ministers, ecumenical partners, community leaders, evangelists, representatives of church organisations, and members of the congregation.

As the Intaka Methodist Church begins a new chapter in its life, the challenge is to ensure that the new building becomes more than a place of worship: it must be a centre of hope, discipleship, prayer, and service to the surrounding community.

The previous day, the Presiding Bishop had visited the Junior Manyano Convention, where she encouraged the children to continue loving Jesus, growing in the Lord, and deepening their faith.











FAITH IN ACTION: UCCSA Soldiers Of Christ Conference Embraces Environmental Stewardship

By Tebogo Oepeng (District Champion)

EJD donates 20 indigenous trees and recognises a young leader championing environmental awareness in agriculture.
Mothibistad, Northern Cape | 16–18 October 2026

The Mokala-Montle District Environmental Justice Desk (EJD), working within the ministry of Ecumenism, participated in the 28th Conference of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA)—Soldiers of Christ, hosted at MT Klaas Memorial SOC, Mothibistad Branch, from 16–18 October 2026.

The gathering provided an opportunity to strengthen Christian fellowship, celebrate leadership, and reaffirm the Church's responsibility to care for God's creation.

Among those present were Rev. Stuurman, the resident minister overseeing Robert Moffat Mission, and Rev. Thapelo Moholoeng. Rev. Stuurman was accompanied by Ms Sediapelo Mothibedi, a final-year Evangelism student. Their presence reflected the importance of bringing together ministry, theological formation, and practical action in service of the Church and wider community.

Twenty Indigenous Trees: A Practical Expression of Faith.
As part of its ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, the EJD donated 20 indigenous trees to the conference. Two trees were planted at the venue as a symbolic expression of the collective responsibility to protect and nurture God's creation. The remaining trees were allocated to different branches, extending the initiative beyond the conference venue and encouraging continued environmental action within local congregations.

Through this contribution, the EJD reaffirmed that environmental justice must move beyond words and declarations. It must be demonstrated through practical interventions that promote sustainability, protect biodiversity, and safeguard the well-being of present and future generations.

Recognising Leadership with an Environmental Vision
A significant highlight was the pinning of Mr Tetelo Kgopodithata, Chairperson of the Soldiers of Christ, in recognition of his leadership and commitment.

A young, brilliant, and down-to-earth leader, Mr Kgopodithata is also a commercial farmer whose interests extend beyond his immediate agricultural activities. He is looking towards making a meaningful contribution to environmental awareness within the agricultural sector, particularly among livestock farmers.

His vision highlights an important environmental concern: the dangers posed by plastic and other waste materials carelessly discarded in grazing areas and the wider environment.

Cattle, sheep and other livestock can accidentally ingest these materials while grazing. This can cause serious harm to the animals, affecting their health and welfare. Where contaminated animals enter the food chain, there may also be concerns about food safety, depending on the type of material and the circumstances.

Mr Kgopodithata's interest in raising awareness among farmers therefore presents an opportunity to promote responsible waste management, cleaner grazing environments, and improved protection of livestock.

His vision aligns with the EJD's commitment to building partnerships that connect environmental justice with practical community needs. It also demonstrates how agricultural leaders can help bridge the gap between environmental protection, animal welfare, sustainable farming, and human well-being.

A healthy environment supports healthy livestock, sustainable agriculture, and thriving communities.

A Shared Responsibility to Care for Creation
The EJD continues to encourage churches, community leaders, farmers, and other stakeholders to recognise that caring for creation is a shared responsibility.

The Church has an important role to play in creating awareness, encouraging behavioural change, and building partnerships that translate faith into practical environmental action.

As Psalm 24:1 reminds us: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” This Scripture challenges us to become responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us. Whether through planting indigenous trees, protecting grazing land, preventing pollution, or educating communities, every meaningful intervention contributes to the preservation of God's creation.

The participation of the EJD at the 28th UCCSA Soldiers of Christ Conference was therefore more than a tree donation. It was an opportunity to encourage collaboration, recognise emerging leadership, and promote an environmental vision that extends into the agricultural sector.

As Mr Kgopodithata looks towards engaging farmers on environmental awareness, his vision offers an important reminder that environmental justice requires the participation of every sector of society.

Twenty trees. One shared responsibility. A healthier environment for generations to come.
Environmental Justice is not Optional!

From left to right: Sis. Thandeka Mashibini—District CM Task Team, Ebenezer Circuit; Tebogo Oepeng—District Champion; and Motlatsi Nqayi—District CM, Superintendent, Bethsaida Circuit.





MCSA CONNEXIONAL EISTEDDFOD CELEBRATES CHORAL EXCELLENCE, YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND MUSIC AS A VOICE AGAINST GBV

From emotionally charged performances confronting gender-based violence and femicide to stirring interpretations of *"The Other Side Awaits"* that earned standing ovations, the 2026 Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) Connexional Eisteddfod showcased the power of music to move hearts, challenge society, and unite the Church in worship and mission.



Hosted by the Connexional Music Association (CMA) on 10 October 2026 at the Linder Auditorium, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, the Eisteddfod brought together choirs from 11 participating Districts under the theme "Singing through Dissonance and Consonance." The event was characterised by a vibrant atmosphere, enthusiastic audience participation, and spirited responses that kept the auditorium alive throughout the programme. With the venue reaching full capacity, the occasion reflected the enduring place of choral music in the life of the Methodist community.





A major highlight was the presentation of commissioned and selected performances inspired by the MCSA's 2025-2026 Conference theme, "Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry: The Other Side Awaits." These performances kept the audience on the edge of their seats, with some choirs receiving standing ovations in recognition of their compelling interpretations. The quality of preparation, purposeful presentation, and enthusiasm demonstrated by the choirs reflected their commitment to conveying the message of the Conference theme through music. Their performances brought the theme to life, inviting the church to reflect on its calling to embrace change, respond faithfully to God's mission, and journey towards the possibilities that await on the other side.

Equally moving were the performances by the Female Voice and Male Voice choirs, which presented songs addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Through heartfelt interpretations and powerful delivery, the choirs gave musical expression to the pain experienced by victims and survivors, the demand for justice, and the hope for healing. Some performances moved audience members to tears, transforming moments of musical celebration into opportunities for deep reflection and shared compassion. These performances challenged the Church and wider community to confront the scourge of GBV and femicide and reaffirm the dignity, safety, and worth of every person.

Recognising the emotional weight of these themes, the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Pumla Nzimande (PB) in her address expressed a commitment to deploy counsellors at the next Eisteddfod should GBV and femicide form part of its programme. This commitment acknowledges that music can bring painful experiences to the surface and that appropriate pastoral and emotional support should be available to those who may need it. It also affirms the Church's responsibility not only to raise awareness but to accompany individuals and communities with compassion and practical care.

The future of the Methodist music ministry was equally evident in the participation of youth choirs from all 11 participating Districts. Their presence demonstrated the commitment of young people to the church's musical heritage and the importance of creating opportunities for emerging talent to flourish. A particularly memorable moment was the participation of the youngest conductor, an eight-year-old, whose involvement highlighted the potential for musical leadership to be nurtured from an early age. The CMA encourages Districts and congregations to continue investing in young choristers and emerging conductors, enabling them to grow in confidence and take an active role in the life of the Church.

The competition culminated in the crowning of Lukhanji Circuit of the Kumkani Hintsa District as the overall champions, following their victory in the 'Senior A Mixed Choir' category. The choir will represent the MCSA at the Tiro Mpane Foundation Eisteddfod in December 2026, competing in the Interdenominational category.

The CMA extends its sincere gratitude to all participating Districts and choirs, adjudicators, programme directors, volunteers, sponsors, partner organisations, the Central District, and supporters whose contributions made the Eisteddfod a success.

The 2026 Connexional Eisteddfod was more than a competition. It was an expression of the church's faith, a platform for emerging leadership, and a call to social responsibility. Through music that inspired standing ovations, stirred deep emotion, and united generations, the Eisteddfod reaffirmed the role of Methodist music ministry in worship, mission, healing, and transformation.

YOUTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: Moreleta Circuit—Mamelodi Central Society

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to advance youth economic development and empowerment in our communities. Through this partnership, the Methodist Children and Youth Unit (MCYU), in collaboration with the NYDA, is working to equip young people with the skills and knowledge they need to pursue employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

On 6–7 October 2026, Moreleta Circuit hosted the NYDA Life Skills Training Programme at Mamelodi Central Methodist Society. The two-day training brought together more than 40 young people aged between 18 and 35 from the Mamelodi community in Tshwane, including both Methodist and non-Methodist participants.

The NYDA's Life Skills Training Programme is offered free of charge and is designed to equip young South Africans with practical life skills, self-awareness, resilience, and problem-solving abilities to enhance their readiness for employment and entrepreneurship. Through a range of core learning modules, the programme strengthens participants' interpersonal skills, personal development, and workplace readiness.

As the MCSA, we are called to continue supporting initiatives that promote youth economic empowerment and create opportunities for young people to thrive. By opening our church buildings and making our resources available to our communities, we can ensure that our sanctuaries become beacons of hope, healing, and development, empowering young people to build brighter and more sustainable futures.







MOKALA-MONTLE DISTRICT EJD NURTURES 511 YOUNG ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

By Tebogo Oepeng (District Champion)

Children's Ministry Come-Together places creation care at the heart of Christian discipleship.

WARRENTON, NORTHERN CAPE | OCTOBER 2026

The Environmental Justice Desk (EJD) of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's Mokala-Montle District engaged 511 Children's Ministry Kids (CMKs) during the District's Children's Ministry Come-Together, held from 2–4 October 2026 at Warrenton Culture Resort in the Northern Cape.

The engagement connected Christian discipleship with environmental justice and climate change awareness, encouraging children to recognise their role in protecting God's creation.

FEEDING THE LAMBS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

Guided by Jesus' instruction in John 21:15, "Feed my lambs," the EJD shared lessons on the importance of trees, climate change, and humanity's responsibility to protect the natural environment.

Drawing on Genesis 2:15, which calls humanity to care for creation, children were introduced to the 5Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rethink. These principles encourage them to avoid unnecessary plastics, minimise waste, reuse materials, recycle, and make responsible everyday choices.

The message was simple: caring for the environment begins with practical actions at home, school, church, and in the wider community.

NURTURING YOUNG ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS

A highlight of the engagement was the participation of three young girls representing different Circuits:

- Kaone Ogone Khoele, 11, from Bloemfontein Circuit.
- Kaone Lesenyeho, 10, from SJ Litheko Circuit.
- Rano Athenkosi Mpolweni, 8, from Diamond Fields Circuit.

Their participation highlighted the importance of giving children opportunities to contribute ideas and take an active role in the Church's environmental mission.

Circuit leaders, ministers, Sunday school teachers, and parents were encouraged to lead by example, ensuring that children see responsible environmental practices reflected in everyday life.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY WELCOMES THE INITIATIVE

The District's Children's Ministry Superintendent, Motlatsi Nqayi, affectionately known as Auntie Momo, welcomed the EJD's contribution and appreciated the knowledge shared with the 511 children.

She emphasised the importance of equipping young people with awareness and love for God's creation, particularly through practical lessons on tree planting and caring for the environment.

The EJD expressed appreciation to the Children's Ministry leadership for making space for environmental education within the programme.

MY TREE—MY OXYGEN: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The 2026 theme, "My Tree—My Oxygen," reminds us that trees are essential to human well-being and the health of the planet. They provide shade, support biodiversity, protect soil, and absorb carbon dioxide.

However, planting trees is only the beginning; they must be nurtured and protected to flourish. Similarly, environmental education must be reinforced through continued learning and practical action.

The Mokala-Montle District's engagement demonstrates the importance of including children in conversations and initiatives addressing climate change. They are not only the leaders of tomorrow but also active participants in shaping a healthier environment today.

My Tree—My Oxygen. We Go Green. We Care for Creation. Environmental Justice is not Optional.



EJD, Champions: From left to right: Kaone Ogone Khoele—Bloemfontein Circuit; Kaone Lesenyeho—SJ Litheko Circuit; and Rano Athenkosi Mpolweni—Diamond Fields Circuit.



From left to right: Sis. Thandeka Mashibini—District CM Task Team, Ebenezer Circuit; Tebogo Oepeng—District Champion; and Motlatsi Nqayi—District CM, Superintendent, Bethsaida Circuit.

YWM & JM CONNEXIONAL CCS WORKSHOP 2026

From 22–25 October 2026, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Young Women's Manyano, and Junior Manyano gathered at Mopani Lodge, Pretoria, for a transformative Connexional CCS Workshop hosted by the Limpopo District.

Under the theme "Lord, teach us to pray", the workshop brought together CCS and members of the Organisation from across the Connexion for a time of spiritual renewal, learning, fellowship, and renewed commitment to service.

The workshop was more than a gathering of leaders; it was an invitation to reflect on the responsibility of Christian citizenship and the role each member plays in advancing God's mission within the Church and the wider community.

The programme created meaningful opportunities for participants to deepen their faith, strengthen their leadership abilities, and explore practical ways of responding to the challenges facing our communities.

A particularly meaningful highlight of the Mission Outreach was the donation of 200 pairs of school shoes to learners at Motsweding Primary School. This act of kindness reflected the spirit of Christian love and compassion, bringing practical support to learners and reminding us that serving God also means responding to the needs of our communities. The donation was a tangible expression of our commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Through presentations and interactive sessions, participants were encouraged to recognise that their faith must extend beyond the walls of the Church. Christian citizenship calls us to be active, compassionate, and courageous in addressing social challenges, advocating for justice, and serving those in need.

The workshop also emphasised the importance of finding one's voice as a Christian woman and young leader. Participants were reminded that their voices matter, their experiences are valuable, and their purpose is rooted in God's calling to serve.

Prayer was at the heart of the workshop, reflecting the MCSA Conference 2026 theme, "Anchoring in Prayer."

Throughout the four days, participants were invited to cultivate a deeper and more intentional prayer life. The Tree of Hope became a meaningful symbol of this spiritual journey, providing a space for participants to express their hopes, prayers, commitments, and aspirations through written leaves.

Each leaf represented a personal prayer and a reminder that, even in seasons of uncertainty, we remain rooted in the hope and faithfulness of God.

The workshop reminded us that prayer is not merely a spiritual practice but the foundation of our service, leadership, and witness.

The workshop also challenged participants to translate their faith into practical action.

The Mission Outreach programme provided an opportunity to engage with the community and demonstrate Christian love through service. It was a powerful reminder that the work of Christian citizenship begins when we move beyond words and respond to the needs of others.

Other highlights included a self-defence session, which equipped participants with practical skills and encouraged personal safety and confidence, as well as discussions on raising a boy child and embracing personal success.

These sessions reinforced the importance of holistic development, empowering women and young people to become informed, confident, and compassionate leaders.

Another highlight of the workshop was the District Expo, which provided Districts with a platform to showcase their diverse skills, talents, creativity, and initiatives. The Expo celebrated the unique gifts within our Connexion and created opportunities for Districts to learn from one another, exchange ideas, and appreciate the richness of our collective contributions.

The workshop also provided an opportunity to commemorate important awareness initiatives through meaningful dress codes.

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Participants observed Thursday in Black, standing in solidarity against gender-based violence and affirming a commitment to a world free from violence. Mental health awareness and breast cancer awareness were also highlighted through the different dress codes, reminding participants of the importance of compassion, support, education, and breaking the stigma surrounding these issues.

These moments demonstrated that Christian citizenship involves not only spiritual growth but also advocacy, awareness, and standing alongside those who need our support.

Beyond the formal programme, the workshop created opportunities for fellowship, networking, and the sharing of experiences among Districts.

Participants were encouraged to build lasting relationships, learn from one another, and return to their respective Districts with renewed enthusiasm for the work of Christian citizenship.



As the workshop came to a close, participants departed with more than memories of a meaningful gathering. They carried renewed faith, strengthened voices, and a clearer sense of purpose.

The Connexional CCS Workshop affirmed that Christian citizenship is not simply a position or portfolio; it is a calling to live out the Gospel through service, advocacy, compassion, and responsible leadership.

May we continue to be young women whose faith shapes our voices, whose voices inspire action, and whose actions reflect the love of Christ. To God be the glory.





SANIBONANI: Dear Future

By Rev. Mike Vorster



What are we leaving for future generations?
What do we refuse to pass on?
What kind of world are we choosing to build together?

As part of Kairos' Canada's 25th anniversary, they are launching #DearFuture, a campaign inviting people across the Kairos network to share their hopes, commitments, and visions for a more just future. The campaign asks us to reflect on what we have inherited and what we want future generations to inherit from us.

Many of us are not part of the Kairos Network but may be part of the Church network.

Writing your message is simple:

Start with: "Dear Future..."
Then share a hope, promise, lesson, or call to action.

Together, let's create a powerful collection of voices imagining and shaping a future rooted in justice, dignity, hope, and radical love.

The future isn't something we inherit. It's something we shape.

The Why
The world is changing quickly. We are seeing the impacts of frequent intense climate patterns, migration, injustice, inequality, marginalisation, violent conflict, and new technologies like AI changing the way we live and connect with one another.

But the future isn't set in stone. And we don't have to accept the world as it is.

What if we stopped asking what the future holds, and started deciding what it could become?

The future isn't just something we inherit.
It's something we create.

#DearFuture is an invitation to think about what we have inherited, what we refuse to pass on, and what we want to build together.

Share your hopes, lessons, and vision for the generations to come.

Send a short message to the future.
Your message can be written, recorded as audio, or shared through video.

If you wish, you can post your message on social media, etc., creating a growing collection of voices imagining a more just and hopeful future.

And we don't want these messages to stop here. Share your message on social media. Tag your elected officials and leaders. Start a conversation with your community.

So, what would you say about the future?

The How
Create your own #DearFuture message.

PS: "Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by God in heaven." (Matt. 16:19)

PSALM 130 REIMAGINED



By Rev. Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu

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

1. Out of the depths I call to you, O God. I call from beneath what has been carried for too long, from the weariness of having to explain what should already be visible, and from grief for which I have no tidy words. I do not wait until I have climbed out to speak to you. My prayer begins here.

2. O God, hear my voice. Hear the sigh and the rage, the silence after the sentence I cannot finish, and the prayer spoken in the language of my mothers. Hear what my body remembers when my mouth has grown tired of speaking. There are things within me for which words have not yet come. Hear me from here.

3. If you kept a ledger of our wrongdoing, O God, who could stand? I cannot place myself outside the harm human beings do to one another. I need your mercy too. Yet you know every wound and the reach of every hand that caused it. You know who has been silenced and who had the power to silence. Let my confession tell the truth before you.

4. But with you there is forgiveness. When we wound one another, something among us is torn, and your mercy calls us towards truth, repentance, and repair. You do not make the wounded responsible for restoring what they did not break. Therefore, O God, we stand in awe of you.

5. I wait for you, O God, with my whole being, and in your word I place my hope. I wait with women who kept families and communities alive while history remembered somebody else's name. I wait with mothers listening for children to return and with those sitting beside hospital beds through the night. I wait with those who came before me and knew how to keep living when they could not yet see how the story would end. Teach me that kind of waiting.

6. My soul waits for you more than watchkeepers wait for morning, more than watchkeepers wait for morning. The watchkeeper cannot drag the sun over the horizon. She remains awake through the darkness, watching for the first change in the sky. When her eyes grow tired, others are watching too.

7. People of God, hope in the Holy One. My cry from the depths belongs among our cries, and my longing for morning joins yours. Let us not reach safer ground and forget those still calling from below. For with the Holy One there is steadfast love, and with the Holy One there is abundant redemption.

8. Redeem us, O God, from the sins we confess and the sins we have learned to live with. Redeem what we have done to one another and what has been handed from one generation to the next. Reach us where we cannot climb out by ourselves. We remain turned towards you, trusting that your steadfast love is deeper still than the depths from which we cry.

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF FAITH, LEADERSHIP, AND SERVICE:
1st Somerset West Girls' Brigade Company

The 90th Anniversary Celebration of the 1st Somerset West Girls' Brigade Company marked a significant milestone in the history of one of Somerset West's longest-standing youth ministries.

Members, past and present, gathered in thanksgiving to celebrate ninety years of nurturing faith, developing leadership, and serving the community through the ministry of the Girls' Brigade.

Founded ninety years ago, the 1st Somerset West Girls' Brigade Company has played a transformative role in the lives of countless girls and young women.

Across generations, the organisation has remained committed to its mission of helping girls become followers of Jesus Christ while instilling values of self-control, responsibility, reverence, compassion, discipline, and service. Through weekly programmes, leadership development opportunities, community outreach initiatives, and Christian fellowship, the company has provided a safe and nurturing environment where young women can grow spiritually, socially, and personally.

The impact of the Girls' Brigade extends far beyond its membership. Over the decades, it has empowered young women to become confident leaders, active citizens, and positive role models within their families, churches, schools, and communities. Particularly in the South African context, where many girls face significant social and economic challenges, the organisation has offered stability, support, mentorship, and hope through its holistic approach to youth development.

A highlight of the anniversary celebration was the attendance of Rev. Phezile Koekoe, Director of Children and Youth Unit in the MCSA, who officiated at the 90th Anniversary and Thanksgiving Service of the 1st Somerset West Girls' Brigade Company. In his message, he affirmed the critical role of the Girls' Brigade in the holistic formation and development of Girls and Young women, to become deeply rooted and committed in their faith, to embody sound moral and ethical values, and to give expression to their faith through active service in social engagement and community outreach.

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Rev. Siyabulela Lungana, the Resident Minister of Church Street Methodist Church, was the liturgist in the worship service, and also in attendance was a remarkable guest, the former Company Captain, Ms Anne Gordon, who at the remarkable age of 97, joined the festivities. Ms Gordon served the company with dedication and passion for many years, and her presence provided a living connection to the rich heritage and legacy of the organisation. Her attendance was warmly received and served as a reminder of the generations of women who have faithfully contributed to the success and sustainability of the company. Also in attendance was Ms Cassandra Gabriel, the National President of Girls' Brigade South Africa, and the leader of the 1st Somerset West Girls' Brigade Company, whose own journey within the organisation exemplifies its lasting impact. Cassandra joined the Girls' Brigade at the age of six and progressed through the ranks, completing both the Young Leaders Training Course and Officers Course. Beyond her local leadership role, Cassandra has made significant contributions to the broader Girls' Brigade movement.

Reflecting on the influence of the organisation in her own life, Cassandra credits the Girls' Brigade with helping her develop self-confidence, leadership skills, compassion, discipline, and resilience. She remains committed to ensuring that future generations of girls have access to the same opportunities for growth, mentorship, and spiritual development that shaped her own journey.

The celebration was also graced by the former chaplain of the Girls' Brigade, MCSA Supernumerary Minister Rev. William Simons, who has played a very significant role in the formation and growth of the Girls' Brigade; the Vice President of the Girls' Brigade International was also in attendance; Western Cape Boys' Brigade leadership; ecumenical guests from other faith communities in the Western Cape; and the Apostolic Faith Mission Choir entertained the guest with their melodic worship together with Church Street Methodist Choir. Former Girls' Brigade and Current Girls' Brigade rendered different songs and items.

As the company celebrates its 90th anniversary, it does so with gratitude for the women who laid its foundations, the leaders who sustained it through changing times, and the generations of girls whose lives have been enriched through its ministry.

The celebration was not only a reflection on a proud history, but also a reaffirmation of the organisation's ongoing mission to "Seek, Serve, and Follow Christ" and to continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of young women for years to come.

The celebration ended with former brigades and current brigades marching the streets of Somerset West, which was a powerful and prophetic reminder that the Girls' Brigade continues to be a safe haven for girls in these communities.

It continues to provide structured alternative ways of life to the communities that are overwhelmed by so many challenges like gang violence, poverty, drugs and substance abuse, human trafficking, in high-risk areas like Macasar strand, Mitchells Plain, Manenberg, Hanover Park, Cape Flats and Delft, and many other communities.

Girls' Brigade is one of the Children and Youth Ministries within the Methodist Children and Youth Unit.



Former Girls' Brigade Choir



ABOVE: Ms Anne Gordon, a former Captain of the 1st Somerset West Girls Brigade Captain. She is currently 97 years old.





TSWELOPELE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY: Where Young Environmental Ambassadors, Faith And Action Converge

By Tebogo Oepeng (District Champion)

On 24 September 2026, Tswelopele Local Municipality marked Heritage Day with a tree-planting initiative that brought together schools, churches, and community partners in a shared commitment to a greener future.

A total of 67 trees were planted at six schools in Phahameng and Bultfontein, strengthening the municipality's contribution to the Ten Million Trees Campaign. The initiative also supported approximately 80 school-based Eco-Clubs, encouraging learners to take an active role in caring for their environment.

Two Grade 8 learners from Rainbow Secondary School, Katlego Sonopo and Keletso Mosala, emerged as young environmental ambassadors, demonstrating the important role that young people can play in promoting environmental awareness and action.

The initiative was supported by educators and faith leaders, including Pastor Ellen Mosala of Rivers Of Grace Apostolic Ministry, who is also an educator, and Bishop-Elect Rev. Vuyelwa Sebolao. Their participation highlighted the value of collaboration between faith communities, schools, and local government in building environmentally conscious communities.

The tree-planting activity also reflected the biblical call in Genesis 2:15 to work and care for the earth. Psalm 24:1 reminds us that the earth belongs to the Lord, reinforcing the responsibility entrusted to humanity to protect creation.

CONCLUSION: MY TREE—MY OXYGEN

The Tswelopele Heritage Day initiative demonstrates what can be achieved when young people, schools, churches, municipalities, and communities work together. The 67 trees planted, the approximately 80 Eco-Clubs, and the participation of young environmental ambassadors represent an investment in a greener future.

The responsibility now is to nurture the trees, strengthen the Eco-Clubs, and ensure that environmental awareness translates into lasting action.

As the Mokala-Montle District Environmental Justice Desk, we remain committed to promoting practical environmental initiatives that reflect our shared responsibility to care for God's creation.

MY TREE—MY OXYGEN.
OUR ENVIRONMENT,
OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

Environmental Justice is not Optional.

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." — Psalm 24:1



Bishop Elect, Rev. Vuyelwa Sebolao, session about the importance of trees.



From left to right: Lt. Col Lorato Mabeleng—Bainsvlei Station Commander; Captain Mary Chabane; and Constable Keorapetse Sebusi.



From left to right: Mr. Jack Matlhoane—Environmental Graduate Intern, DFFE; Bishop Elect, Rev. Vuyelwa Sebolao—MCSA; Mr. Jack Tsiane—Tswelopele Local Municipality; and Pastor Ellen Mosala—Rivers Of Grace Apostolic Movement (ROGAM).



Mr. Kenneth Mposula: Principal—Rainbow Secondary School, Bultfontein

WESLEY GUILD'S FIRST TRIENNIAL CONVENTION

Responsible Grace in Motion: Relocated, Repositioned, Ready for the Other Side

What a time to be alive! What an era to be a Guilder in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa!

Guilders from across the Connexion gathered in the Central District for the historic first Wesley Guild Triennial Convention under the theme, "Responsible Grace in Motion: Relocated, Repositioned, Ready for the Other Side." The gathering marked an important milestone of fellowship, worship, reflection, and Holy Conferencing in the life of the movement.

A Connexional moment of unity and renewal
For the Mozambique District (1300), the convention was particularly significant. Br. Lucas Sitoe reflected on the District's first consultation and official launch of the Wesley Guild, which included the robing of members, followed by participation in the historic Connexional gathering.

Drawing on Ephesians 2:8–10, he noted that salvation is freely given through God's grace, but believers have a responsibility to respond through faith. The theme inspired and empowered members to trust God to relocate and reposition them for the work ahead. The District now looks forward to hosting its first District Convention.

"*Um caminho, um coração* – One heart, one way!"

Br. Andile Philiso of the William Kama District (0200) described the convention as both the closing of a chapter and the beginning of another. Having attended the first Connexional Convention in George, he acknowledged the foundations laid by the outgoing leadership and called for stronger understanding of governance and the distinct responsibilities of Connexional, District, Circuit, and Society structures.

He also celebrated the diversity of worship, noting that Connexionality was best expressed not through uniformity, but through unity that celebrates the diversity of Districts.

Thursdays in Black: Standing against gender-based violence
The convention opened with delegates, officials, and observers wearing black in solidarity with the Thursdays in Black campaign against gender-based violence and femicide.

A memorable video captured participants freezing upon hearing the Wesley Guild motto, "One Heart, One Way." The moment offered a powerful symbolic reminder that the Church cannot continue with business as usual in the face of violence and injustice.

Responsible grace calls us to stop, listen, recognise the suffering of others, and take action. The fight against gender-based violence is a shared responsibility of the entire Church community.



Induction: Called to become an expression of God's grace
On 23 October 2026, Rev. Phezile Koekoe, Director of the Children and Youth Unit, inducted the new Connexional General Wesley Guild Executive under the theme "Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry—Becoming an Expression of God's Grace."

Drawing on Esther 4:14, Isaiah 6:1–8, and Luke 5:12–16, Rev. Koekoe challenged the incoming leadership to recognise the significance of their calling at a time when young people across the Connexion continue to experience unemployment, discrimination, exclusion, and marginalisation.

He emphasised that the convention was not merely about electing leaders, but about revitalising the Guild's mission and ministry. Calling for prophetic leadership, he urged the executive to speak for the poor and powerless, challenge injustice, and offer hope to those in despair.

At the heart of his charge was the call to embody God's grace through compassion and justice. Just as Jesus restored the dignity of the leper by reaching out and touching him, the Wesley Guild must become a welcoming and healing community that embraces the rejected and marginalised.

Concluding with Isaiah's response to God's call, "Here I am. Send me!", Rev. Koekoe encouraged the new leaders to ground their service in prayer, commitment to Christ, and the revival of the Guild's prophetic and social action ministry.





Mission in action: Supporting students
Demonstrating its commitment to Community Development, one of the Wesley Guild's Four Cs for Christ, the Connexional Wesley Guild, through the Central District, donated R10,000 to the Central District Methodist Students' Society (MethSSoc).



The contribution supports the MethSSoc Food Bank Campaign, which provides meals to students at institutions of higher learning and training across the

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District, reflecting the Guild's commitment to practical expressions of grace and solidarity.

Presidential Address: Renewing discipleship and mission
In his address to the first Triennial Convention, General President Rev. Silolo drew on Ephesians 2:8–10 to remind Guilders that salvation is God's gift of grace, but that believers are created in Christ for good works.

He paid tribute to the outgoing General President, Rev. Lwazi Kondlo, and his executive, recognising them as pioneers who established the foundations and structures of the Connexional Wesley Guild.



He thanked Rev. Kondlo, Br. Hlonelikhaya Klaas, Sis Ziningi Ngidi, and Sis Londeka Makhoba for their sacrifice and servant leadership.

"Under your leadership, responsible grace was not merely discussed; it was indeed in motion."



Reflecting on the wider significance of 2026, Rev. Silolo acknowledged the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the MCSA and the 50th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising. He celebrated the women who overcame barriers to ministry and remembered Wesley Guild member Teboho "Tsietsi" Mashinini for his contribution to the 1976 student uprising. He encouraged young people to support the Tsietsi Mashinini bursary fund and exercise their democratic right to vote in the upcoming local government elections.

Addressing contemporary challenges, he highlighted unemployment, poverty, food insecurity, unequal access to education, and gender-based violence. He reminded Guilders of the importance of believing and supporting survivors of violence, while challenging young people to use social media responsibly for evangelism, discipleship, and constructive engagement. He also called for greater social cohesion and respect for shared humanity in responding to xenophobia.

Drawing on Randy L. Maddox's Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology (1994), Rev. Silolo explained that responsible grace involves both God's initiative and humanity's response. While grace is freely given, believers are called to receive it actively and demonstrate it through their lives.

He challenged Guilders to recover the spiritual purpose of the movement, strengthening their commitment to prayer, Bible study, class meetings, Holy Communion, and the Four Cs for Christ.

Connecting the theme to Romans 12:2, he called for a renewed mindset and a movement committed to expressing holiness through love, mercy, and social action. Practical responses included supporting survivors of gender-based violence, addressing xenophobia, promoting financial and digital literacy, establishing community gardens and skills development initiatives, and strengthening ecumenical partnerships through Local Ecumenical Action Networks (LEANS).

Seven priorities for the incoming executive
To strengthen the movement, Rev. Silolo outlined seven priorities for the new General Executive:

1. Strengthening constitutional education, governance, and accountability.
2. Establishing a centralised digital membership and skills database.
3. Improving financial sustainability through fundraising, partnerships, and income-generating initiatives.
4. Supporting Mission Districts, particularly Mozambique, Camdeboo, and Namibia.
5. Strengthening partnerships, coordination, and communication.
6. Introducing people-centred approaches to community development training.
7. Expanding digital communication through the Wesley Guild website and resource centre.

He challenged Guilders to understand that being relocated and repositioned by grace means being ready to act rather than waiting for permission.

"As a Wesley Guild relocated and repositioned by grace, we are called to be ready, not waiting for permission, but empowered to act in hope and faith."

Elections: Entrusted with the next chapter
An important part of the Triennial Convention was the election of a new General Executive to lead the movement into its next three-year term. The elected leadership is subject to ratification by the Connexional Children and Youth Conference and the MCSA Conference.

The newly elected leaders are:

- Rev. Akhona Masiza: *President Elect*
- Sr. Tieho Mahlatsi: *Vice-President Elect*
- Br. Aviwe Mvoko: *General Secretary Elect*
- Sr. Duduzile Ngema: *General Treasurer Elect*

One heart, one way!

The first Wesley Guild Triennial Convention celebrated the movement's history, diversity, and fellowship while calling Guilders to renewed purpose and commitment.

As the Wesley Guild enters a new chapter, the challenge is to move beyond words and become active expressions of God's grace through faithful discipleship, courageous leadership, justice, and service.

Guilders, one heart, one way. Until we meet again!



REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN LEADERSHIP: Jubilee 2026

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING: Lessons In Leadership From The First ~~Female~~ President Of SMMS



By Dr Rowanne Marie: First Female President of the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary

Dr Rowanne Marie is a founding staff member of the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary (SMMS), having been appointed on 1 October 2008. On 1 August 2019, she was appointed President of the Seminary, making her the first woman to hold this position since the institution opened its doors. She also became one of the few women to lead a theological institution belonging to a major Christian denomination in Southern Africa.

During her time at SMMS, Dr Marie has served in various strategic positions, successfully guiding the institution through the complexities of the higher education regulatory framework and ensuring its continued registration and accreditation with the relevant authorities.

With more than 25 years of experience in theological education, Dr Marie is passionate about community development, empowerment, gender justice, and ethical leadership.

Challenging gender stereotypes in leadership
Dr Marie observes that institutions are, by their very nature, often male-dominated spaces. This is particularly true of theological institutions. However, the landscape is gradually changing as more women respond to the call to lead such institutions.

The experiences of women leaders are frequently shaped by stereotypes rooted in prescribed gender roles. In the workplace, for example, gender divisions often determine which responsibilities are regarded as 'women's work' and which are considered 'men's work'. When individuals step outside these socially prescribed roles, they are often met with suspicion and resistance.

One biblical example Dr Marie particularly appreciates is Sheerah, the builder, whose story challenges stereotypes and breaks through traditional gender barriers. Sheerah was an ancient Israelite woman who entered a traditionally male-dominated space as a city builder (1 Chronicles 7:22–24).

Dr Marie explains:
"I use this story to illustrate that it is possible to move beyond roles that are attached to gender. Although she built three cities, one finds it most frustrating that such an achievement is mentioned in just one verse of Scripture. This also highlights the discomfort of the writer in giving attention to this achievement, because it was not considered to be women's work.

"This narrative presents us with courage and aspiration to step into roles that have traditionally been male-dominated, whether in education, religion, innovation, technology, or the sciences.

"It presents us with a tension between perception and reality. Perception limits and confines us, while reality sets us free. Perception is subjective, while reality is objective. Perception highlights why something cannot be done, while reality is the lived experience of how it can be done."

The lessons from Sheerah's story are simple but profound. Women who occupy traditionally male-dominated leadership positions must refuse to be confined by society's perceptions of leadership. Instead, they must embrace their reality, demonstrate their capabilities, and get the job done.

Five lessons for women in leadership
Reflecting on her experience as a woman leading a complex higher education institution, Dr Marie identifies five important principles that have helped her navigate the responsibilities and demands of leadership.

1. Build a team
Navigating the complexities of an institution requires teamwork and collaboration. As leaders build teams, they also build trust, confidence, skills, commitment, loyalty, and courage.

Women and men need to work alongside one another, shoulder to shoulder, to advance the work to which they have been called. No one can successfully lead such an institution as a lone ranger. Doing so can lead to isolation and burnout.

Building a strong team is essential. After all, this is God's work, and we are merely agents called to facilitate formation and transformation.

2. Good governance is non-negotiable
Governance structures provide important spaces for consultation, guidance, and support. They also create opportunities for accountability, integrity, transparency, and vulnerability.

Leaders should never feel intimidated by these systems and structures. Dr Marie acknowledges the support, encouragement, and motivation she has received from the directors of the Seminary, which have contributed significantly to her leadership.

Working alongside a fellow woman, Dr Phumla Mnganga, who chairs the SMMS Board, has been particularly meaningful. Dr Marie values the opportunity to draw on her colleague's experience and extensive knowledge of higher education and the MCSA.

3. Find the balance between leading with emotion and leading emotionally
Emotional intelligence is essential to effective leadership and requires continuous development. It helps leaders balance grace and law, people, and policy, while remaining sensitive to the emotions and needs of others and ensuring compliance with institutional regulations.

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Dr Marie emphasises the importance of understanding the difference between leading with emotion and leading emotionally. Leaders should never lose touch with their emotions. They must make time to empathise with people, understand their needs and respond compassionately. However, they must guard against making hasty or subjective decisions based solely on their personal feelings.

The challenge is to remain compassionate and empathetic while exercising sound judgement and maintaining professional responsibility.

4. Remain true to God, yourself, and others
Occupying a leadership position should never require women to compromise their identity or change who they are. Women leaders must remain authentic and resist the pressure to become carbon copies of male leaders.

They should never feel compelled to fill someone else's shoes, nor should they be too proud to learn from those who have gone before them.

Above all, they must remain committed to the God who called them and continue serving God's people with faithfulness and diligence.

5. Fortify the foundations
Institutional foundations are often laid by those who have served before us. Leaders must appreciate these foundations, build on them, and remain humble enough to seek the wisdom, guidance, and advice of those who have travelled the journey before them.
Dr Marie reflects that, in order to go up, we sometimes need to go down. This means returning to the foundations, strengthening them, and ensuring that the institution's core remains resilient during difficult times.

Many of us remember the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a period of immense devastation, uncertainty, and disruption. While many institutions struggled or closed their doors, those with strong foundations were better positioned to withstand the challenges.

Strong foundations are therefore essential for institutional sustainability and resilience.

Celebrating 50 years of women's ordination
As the MCSA celebrates 50 years of women's ordination, Dr Marie pays tribute to the women who responded faithfully to God's call and helped make the journey possible for generations that followed.

She concludes:
"As we observe the event of 50 years of Women's Ordination in the MCSA, I honour, value and appreciate every one of my fellow Sisters who said yes to the call!"

50 YEARS OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION: Celebrating Progress, Confronting Patriarchy

By Andisiwe Mrara
Female Seminarian

In most of the Circuits from which we come, men are given more opportunities than women to enter ministry. In some instances, men are actively recruited into ministry, while women are overlooked. Women are often not recognised or empowered to exercise their call to ministry. Instead, they are expected to suppress it. Witnessing this inequality discourages some women from responding to God's call. Others come from patriarchal family backgrounds where their decision to enter ministry may be discouraged or opposed.

Is this a time of celebration or lament?

It is both. On the one hand, we are celebrating 50 years of women's ordination. On the other hand, we are lamenting the fact that, even after 50 years, the Church has not fully embraced women in ministry. Women may be accepted into the Church, but the Church still struggles to understand and recognise their place and contribution. We continue to operate within a patriarchal system in which women are accepted but are not necessarily considered for suitable stations or leadership positions. They are accepted, but their calling is not always understood, affirmed, or supported.

What should the Church do?

The Church should embrace women and actively practise equality for all people. It must recognise women's gifts and callings, accept them fully, and ensure that they receive equal treatment and opportunities to serve.

What is God teaching the Church?

God is teaching the Church that all human beings are created equally, and that God calls people, irrespective of gender, to participate in the expansion of God's Kingdom.

Has the Church fully embraced women's leadership?

No. The Church has not fully embraced women's leadership. When the Church is given the opportunity to elect leaders freely, women are often not considered unless there is an explicit requirement that a woman must be elected. This demonstrates that resistance to women's leadership continues to exist within the Church.

What needs to change?

The Church needs to repent and intentionally address the patriarchal attitudes and structures that continue to undermine women's participation and leadership. There must be deliberate teaching about gender equality, both within the Church and at broader societal levels, to challenge and dismantle patriarchy. The Church must also create an environment in which women's callings to ministry are recognised, affirmed, and supported.

Furthermore, there should be equal treatment in the way clergy spouses are regarded and treated, regardless of whether the minister is a man or a woman. The Church must move beyond simply accepting women in ministry towards genuinely embracing, supporting, and enabling their leadership.

WHEN GOD CALLS, THE CHURCH MUST AFFIRM: Embracing Women's Leadership In Ministry

By Ntlae Booi
Female Seminarian

I believe God is still calling women into ministry. The challenge, however, is that many women continue to wrestle with cultural expectations, fear of rejection and the perception that ministry belongs primarily to men. Although the Methodist Church has opened the door for women to be ordained, certain attitudes persist, causing some women to question whether they truly belong. As a seminarian, I believe the Church must intentionally encourage and mentor women who are discerning God's call, rather than allowing cultural expectations to speak louder than the Holy Spirit.

For me, this is both a year of celebration and a year of lament. We celebrate because God has raised courageous women who have remained faithful to their calling, even when the journey has been difficult. Their ministry has blessed the Church in countless ways. However, we also lament because many women continue to face challenges that should no longer exist. Celebration should inspire gratitude, while lament should move us towards repentance and transformation.

The Church should reflect the ministry of Jesus Christ, who welcomed, affirmed and entrusted women with the work of God's Kingdom. Ordination should never be determined by gender, but by God's calling. The Church should be a place where women and men serve together with mutual respect, recognising that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to all God's people for the building up of the Church.

I believe God is reminding the Church that divine grace and calling are not limited by gender. Through women in ministry, we see God's compassion, wisdom, resilience and faithfulness. Women's ministry challenges the Church to become more inclusive, just and faithful to the Gospel. It reminds us that when God calls someone, the Church's responsibility is to recognise, affirm and support that calling.

The Church has made meaningful progress, and we should be grateful for this. However, I do not believe we have fully embraced women's leadership. There are still places where women have to work harder to be accepted, respected and trusted. True acceptance must be reflected not only in our policies but also in our attitudes, appointments and the opportunities we create for women to lead.

I believe the Church must continue to examine itself honestly before God. We need to repent wherever prejudice, patriarchy or fear has stood in the way of God's mission. As Methodists, we are called to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land. That holiness should be evident in the way we value and affirm every person whom God has called. We must strengthen our commitment to mentoring women, creating equal opportunities for leadership and building a Church where every person can respond to God's call with confidence.

Only then will we fully reflect the inclusive love, justice and transforming power of Christ.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE = DELIVERY! Bainsvlei SAPS And The Environmental Justice Desk: Two-In-One For Greener Environments And Safer Communities

By Tebogo Oepeng (District Champion)

Twenty indigenous trees. Three schools. One community park. Four trees at the police station. One shared responsibility.

Sometimes, the most meaningful partnerships begin with a simple action: planting a tree. But what happens when that action becomes the starting point for a bigger conversation about environmental responsibility, community participation, and safer neighbourhoods?

That is precisely the opportunity emerging from the collaboration between the South African Police Service (SAPS) at Bainsvlei Police Station in Bloemfontein and the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's (MCSA) Environmental Justice Desk (EJD).

From Tree Planting To Community Impact

Despite the rain, the commitment to environmental stewardship continued!

The MCSA's Environmental Justice Desk donated 20 indigenous trees, which were planted across three schools: Hoërskool President Steyn, WaterBron Primary School, and Ditlatse Primary School. The initiative was warmly received by the respective school principals, demonstrating the value of partnerships that bring environmental action directly into educational spaces.

The greening initiative also extended to Langenhoven Park, where Ward Councillor Atiea Crouse expressed appreciation for the contribution made by the Church and SAPS towards the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

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Ms. Samkelisiwe Lubanga—DFFE, Northern Cape and Prof. Beatrice Tongwane—Lighthouse Worship Center (Host).

At Bainsvlei Police Station, four additional trees were planted, with each dedicated to a representative of the station's leadership and operational teams:

1. Station Commander: Lt. Col. Lorato Mabeleng
2. Visible Policing (VisPol): Capt. Diresh Naidoo
3. Detective Services: Capt. Thapelo Motseki
4. Support Services: Sgt. Selloane Machesa

The exercise demonstrated that caring for the environment is not the responsibility of one institution alone. It is a shared commitment that requires churches, government departments, schools, community leaders, and residents to work together.

Two-In-One: Greening Our Environment, Strengthening Community Safety

Following engagement with the management of Bainsvlei Police Station, the EJD is exploring a proposed strategic partnership with SAPS that could take this collaboration beyond tree planting.

We call this approach "TWO-IN-ONE"—bringing environmental justice and community safety into one collaborative conversation.

The proposal is informed by the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS), particularly Pillar 5: Safety Through Environmental Design. This pillar highlights the importance of considering how physical environments are designed, maintained, and managed to support safer communities.

Through this approach, environmental initiatives could complement crime-prevention efforts by encouraging responsible landscaping, environmental clean-ups, community participation, and the rehabilitation of neglected public spaces.

For example, greening projects must consider appropriate tree placement, visibility, lighting, access routes, and ongoing maintenance. Trees alone do not prevent crime; however, thoughtful environmental management can contribute to more welcoming, better-maintained public spaces when combined with broader safety measures.

Potential areas of collaboration include:

1. Tree planting and responsible environmental management.
2. Environmental education and awareness programmes in schools.
3. Community clean-ups and the rehabilitation of neglected spaces, in collaboration with the relevant authorities.
4. Stronger cooperation between SAPS, churches, schools, municipalities, and local communities.
5. Promoting environmental responsibility as part of building healthier and more welcoming neighbourhoods.

This remains an opportunity to develop a practical partnership through continued engagement between the relevant stakeholders.

Two objectives. One collaborative approach. Shared responsibility. Practical delivery. That is the spirit of TWO-IN-ONE!

Caring For Creation Is Everyone's Responsibility

Psalm 24:1 reminds us: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

Genesis 2:15 further reminds us of humanity's responsibility to care for and cultivate God's creation.

These scriptures challenge us to move beyond words and translate our values into visible action. Environmental justice is not merely about planting trees; it is also about protecting human dignity, improving our surroundings, and building partnerships that respond to the needs of our communities.

As environmentalist Wangari Maathai famously challenged us:
"Until you dig a hole, plant a tree, water it and make it survive, you haven't done anything. You are just talking."

The message is clear: meaningful change requires action, commitment and sustained responsibility.

A Call To Action: Let Us Work Together!

The engagement between the MCSA's Environmental Justice Desk and Bainsvlei SAPS reminds us that when institutions come together around a common purpose, new possibilities emerge.

Let us continue building bridges between faith and public service, environmental stewardship and community safety, and good intentions and practical delivery.

Because the future we want cannot be built by one institution, one department, or one individual alone.

We must work together. We must act together. And we must take responsibility together.
My Tree—My Oxygen!



Bainsvlei SAPS and Mangaung Metro Municipality at the Ten Million Trees Campaign in Langenhoven Park.



Rev. Smanga Bosman, representing the Connexional Mission Unit, giving lessons about the trees.





CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY IN A POLARISED AND POLITICALLY DIVIDED ENVIRONMENT

By Rev. Zukile Makula

President – South African Council of Churches (SACC), Eastern Cape



The Church as an Agent of Hope, Peace, Justice, and Responsible Citizenship Scripture Readings:
Matthew 5:9; Micah 6:8; Romans 12:18

1. Introduction: A Church Called to Stand in the Gap
South Africa finds itself at a critical moment in its democratic journey. As political tensions intensify and communities prepare for the 2026 Local Government Elections, we are reminded that political divisions can easily become divisions within families, communities, workplaces, and even the Church.

Political allegiance can become stronger than our commitment to truth. Party loyalty can overshadow moral responsibility, while political competition can weaken the spirit of ubuntu, mutual respect, and the common good.

In such an environment, the Church must pause and reflect on its calling.

What is our responsibility as Christians when our society is divided? How do we remain faithful to the Gospel when political interests compete with the values of justice, peace, and human dignity? How do we speak prophetically without becoming politically captured?

The answer lies in recovering our identity as the people of God, called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13–16).

The Church is not called to deepen the divisions of society but to offer a different vision of life together. We are called to be a community of hope in times of despair, a voice of truth in times of deception, a defender of justice in times of oppression, and an instrument of reconciliation in times of conflict.

2. The Biblical Foundation of Our Responsibility
In Matthew 5:9, Jesus declares:
"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God." (ASV)

Jesus does not merely bless those who desire peace; he blesses those who actively work to make peace possible.

Christian peace is more than the absence of violence or disagreement. It involves building relationships grounded in truth, justice, reconciliation, and respect for human dignity.

Similarly, Micah 6:8 reminds us that God requires us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

These biblical principles challenge the Church to examine its public witness. We cannot proclaim peace while remaining indifferent to injustice. We cannot preach reconciliation while allowing hatred to flourish. We cannot speak about human dignity while ignoring the suffering of the poor, the unemployed, the vulnerable, and the marginalised.

The Gospel calls us to a faith that is both spiritual and practical, expressed in worship and demonstrated through responsible engagement with society.

3. The Church Must Be Non-Partisan, but Never Morally Neutral
One of the greatest challenges facing the Church in a politically divided society is maintaining its prophetic independence.

The Church must not become an extension of a political party, a campaign platform for political personalities, or a religious instrument for securing political loyalty. The pulpit must remain a place for proclaiming the Gospel, forming conscience, and calling all people to accountability before God.

However, non-partisanship must never be confused with silence in the face of injustice.

When corruption undermines public resources, the Church must speak. When political violence threatens lives, the Church must intervene. When communities are denied essential services, the Church must advocate for accountability. When hatred and discrimination divide our people, the Church must defend the dignity of every human being.

The Church must be able to challenge every political party when its actions contradict justice, integrity, and the common good.

Our loyalty to the Kingdom of God must be greater than our loyalty to any political organisation.

The Church must never allow its prophetic voice to be silenced by political friendships, financial interests, or the fear of losing influence.

4. Christian Responsibility in the Electoral Process
As South Africa approaches the 2026 Local Government Elections, Christians have a responsibility to participate actively, peacefully, and conscientiously in democratic life.

Local government affects the everyday lives of our people. Water, sanitation, electricity, roads, housing, waste management, and local economic development are not merely political talking points; they are matters that directly affect human dignity and community wellbeing.

Christian citizenship therefore requires us to make informed choices, assess political leadership critically, reject misinformation, and hold elected representatives accountable.

The Church should encourage citizens to ask important questions:



- Are our leaders serving the people with integrity and accountability?
- Are public resources being used for the benefit of communities?
- Are the needs of the poor and vulnerable being prioritised?
- Are young people being given meaningful opportunities to participate?

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- Are political leaders promoting peace, unity, and social cohesion?
- Are communities able to hold their representatives accountable without fear or intimidation?

The Church must not dictate which political party people should support. Instead, it must equip them with the moral and spiritual discernment necessary to make responsible decisions.

Our task is not to manufacture political loyalty but to cultivate responsible citizenship.

5. From Political Division to the Common Good
Political disagreement is a normal feature of democratic society. The danger arises when disagreement becomes hostility, when political opponents are treated as enemies, and when party allegiance becomes more important than the wellbeing of the nation.

As Christians, we are called to model a different way of engaging with one another.

We must learn to disagree without dehumanising, debate without humiliating, and challenge harmful policies without promoting hatred against those who support them.

Our congregations should become spaces where people with different political convictions can worship together, listen to one another, and serve their communities together.

This requires humility, patience, and a willingness to listen. It also requires courage to confront falsehood, prejudice, and injustice wherever they appear.

The Church must help our communities move:
- From hatred to mutual respect.
- From political intimidation to peaceful participation.
- From misinformation to truth.
- From corruption to accountability.
- From exclusion to inclusion.
- From political rivalry to the pursuit of the common good.

We must demonstrate that our shared humanity and our calling in Christ are greater than the political identities that divide us.

6. The Ecumenical Responsibility: Working Together for the Life of Our Nation
No single church denomination can address the challenges facing South Africa alone. The present moment calls for a renewed ecumenical witness in which churches work together across denominational boundaries for peace, justice, and the wellbeing of our communities.

The ecumenical movement must provide spaces for dialogue, promote peaceful elections, encourage ethical leadership, and advocate for the needs of those whose voices are often ignored.

As the South African Council of Churches and the wider ecumenical community, our responsibility is to rebuild trust, renew our commitment to public service, and reposition the Church as a credible voice for justice and social transformation.

This work must extend beyond public statements. It must be seen in practical community action, civic education, youth empowerment, support for vulnerable households, and constructive engagement with public representatives.

We must be willing to engage political leaders without surrendering our independence, to cooperate where cooperation advances the common good, and to challenge those in power when their actions undermine the dignity of the people.

The Church must remain a bridge between divided communities, a conscience to those entrusted with public responsibility, and a companion to those who suffer.

7. A Call to Action
This reflection calls upon church leaders, congregations, and Christian citizens to embrace five commitments:

First, commit to truth. Refuse to spread unverified information, inflammatory messages, or political propaganda.

Second, commit to peace. Reject political violence, intimidation, hate speech, and any attempt to turn communities against one another.

Third, commit to justice. Speak courageously against corruption, inequality, discrimination, and the abuse of public power.

Fourth, commit to responsible citizenship. Encourage informed electoral participation, public accountability, and active engagement in local community affairs.

Fifth, commit to the common good. Place the wellbeing of people above party interests, personal ambitions, and narrow political loyalties.

These commitments must become visible in our preaching, our pastoral ministry, our public statements, and our daily relationships.

8. Conclusion: A Prophetic Witness for Such a Time as This
The Church stands at a decisive moment in the life of our nation. Our response to political polarisation will reveal whether we are merely religious institutions or communities genuinely shaped by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We cannot afford to retreat into silence while our communities experience poverty, violence, corruption, and deepening divisions. Neither can we allow ourselves to be captured by political interests that compromise our spiritual and moral independence.

We are called to be peacemakers without becoming silent about injustice, prophetic without becoming partisan, compassionate without becoming compromised, and politically responsible without making politics our god.

Our task is not to baptise political divisions but to bear witness to a better way of living together.

Let us therefore pray for our nation, engage our communities, hold our leaders accountable, and encourage every citizen to participate peacefully and responsibly in the democratic process.

May the Church be found faithful: standing with the vulnerable, speaking truth to power, defending human dignity, and working tirelessly for peace and justice.

Let peace govern our public life, let justice guide our leadership, and let the love of Christ unite us beyond our political differences.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God." — Matthew 5:9 (ASV)

GOSPEL MUSIC FANS LAMENT MISSING VELISWA SKEYI'S PERFORMANCE

By T K Sonjica

President – South African Council of Churches (SACC), Eastern Cape

Gospel music fans around Qonce townships lament missing award-winning gospel musician Veliswa Skeyi's performance at the Reverend VGK Ntshinga Society in Zwelitsha on 09 September 2026. The free performance was part of the Zwelitsha Central Mission Circuit-312's (ZCM) Spiritual Week from 07 to 13 September 2026.

Some fans say it would seem now that she is a Social Worker for the Eastern Cape Department of Education—her music career is being overshadowed by her latest profession and it is very seldom that one sees her on stage. Others claim that her participation at the ZCM Spiritual Week was not broadly advertised because there were few patrons who are not Methodist who attended the service.

Regardless, those who watched when Skeyi reflected in song on the role of the Methodist Church hymns (isiXhosa) in her thirty-year music ministry which began in 1996 with the Lord Comforters were spell bound. It became apparent that she still possesses her vibrant gospel sound.

When rendering a hymn, Skeyi confines herself to the prescripts of every song. However, her ability to improvise enables her to add her flavour to any hymn, thus creating a different, but a beautiful version of the hymn. She was accompanied by a pianist and her backing singers, and the Intimate Singers who are full members of the VGK Ntshinga Society were also there to support her with their voices.

Mention may be made that Skeyi, as the lead singer, spontaneously commands her singers and the audience with her voice. Whenever she hits the high notes, they are with her. When she opts for the low notes, Amadodana's (Young Men's Guild) tenors become clear to every ear in the house. Similarly, the audience with a variety of percussions, whittles, and drumbells add to the excitement of the music.

Her audience was always ready to applaud her at the end of every hymn. During her performance, the audience would stand up, clap hands, and dance. Because many have Skeyi's CDs and know her music, they would join her in singing the Methodist Church hymns.

Skeyi reminded her audience that she is a member of the Assemblies of God Church based at Zone 4 in Zwelitsha. As far as she remembers, at Sunday School at her church and at kindergarten, they sang some of the Methodist Church hymns. One of those is hymn 360 "*Owaqal' esemncinane, Ukumkhonz' uThixo wakhe*", (The one who began at an early age, To worship one's God … Is saved by so doing, From many troubles). On this stanza of the hymn, she remembers asking her father to clarify the essence of this reasoning and he referred her to Proverbs 22:6 where it is stated, "Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life".

She revealed that her home was always a singing family. Everyone was encouraged to have one's hymn of choice which one would sing for whatever purpose. Such hymns are used before one prays in public, to preach or to inspire, encourage or console those in pain. For that purpose, Skeyi chose hymn 56 which is, "*Sinesipho esikhulu, Esisiphiweyo thina*", (We have a great gift, That has been awarded to us). Verse 4 of the hymn identifies the gift and states that, "*Eso sipho nguYesu*", (That gift is Jesus).

On hymn 94, "*UYes' uyakulawula, Aph' ilanga lihambayo*" (Jesus will reign, Where the sun travels) Skeyi admits that she grew up believing that the hymn belongs to her church, the Assemblies of God. The saying then was that the hymn was the founder of their church's favourite hymn, Rev. Nicholas Hepworth Bengu.

Skeyi did tread into the Methodist Church liturgy normally conducted in the Sunday 11h00 services. This is where she came across worship songs like, "*Siyakudumisa Thixo*" (We worship you God) and "*Ndiyakholwa kuThixo*", (I believe in God...). She concurred that whenever one listens to these songs which reach conscience; emotions are bound to be evoked. In such instances, congregants are unable to withhold their tears. Other hymns she rendered are: 262; 81; 56; 36; 178; 296 and 259.



LEFT: Rev. Madodonke Ngwendu welcoming Veliswa Skeyi for her performance at the Reverend VGK Ntshinga Society in Zwelitsha.

RIGHT: The Intimate Worshippers and Veliswa Skeyi's backing singers support her during her performance at the Methodist Church in Zwelitsha.





LEFT: Veliswa Skeyi performing to the delight of her fans at the Methodist Church in Zwelitsha recently.

RIGHT: Congregants couldn't sit down when Veliswa Skeyi was performing at the Methodist Church in Zwelitsha.



MOKALA-MONTLE DISTRICT REACHES 1,700-TREE MILESTONE: A Celebration Of Faith, Partnership, And Environmental Justice.

———By Tebogo Oepeng (Environmental Justice Desk)

DFFE applauds ecumenical collaboration as churches and communities unite to care for God's creation.

When churches move beyond words and work together for the common good, their collective witness can become a powerful instrument of change.

This was the message demonstrated by the Environmental Justice Desk (EJD) of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's Mokala-Montle District during its September Arbor Month activities, culminating on 30 September 2026 at Lighthouse Worship Center in Seven Miles, along the R31 between Kuruman and Hotazel in the Northern Cape.

The celebration marked an important milestone in the District's environmental journey, with 1,700 indigenous and fruit trees distributed or planted across Mokala-Montle District by the end of September 2026.

Held under the 2026 theme, "My Tree—My Oxygen," the initiative brought together faith communities, government representatives, and community institutions around a shared commitment to environmental stewardship, climate change awareness, and the protection of God's creation.

Beyond the number of trees, the initiative demonstrated the potential of ecumenical cooperation and strategic partnerships to translate environmental commitments into practical action.

From Initial Tree Planting To A District-Wide Initiative

The September culmination did not happen in isolation. It grew out of earlier tree-planting activities undertaken around August 2026, which laid the foundation for further collaboration between the EJD and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE).

Following the initial activities, Ms Samkelisiwe Lubanga of the DFFE's Greening and Livelihoods Implementation Support Unit in the Northern Cape engaged the EJD on identifying a suitable venue for a larger Arbor Month culmination.

That engagement opened the door to broader coordination, bringing different churches and community stakeholders together around a common environmental mission.

The result was a programme that extended beyond the ceremonial gathering. On 28 and 29 September, interdenominational teams participated in build-up activities in Ga-Segonyana Local Municipality, within the John Taolo Gaetsewe (JTG) District.

During those two days, 620 trees were distributed: 500 indigenous trees and 120 fruit trees. These activities contributed to the District's overall milestone of 1,700 trees distributed or planted by the end of September.

The build-up and culmination reflected a shared understanding that environmental justice requires sustained engagement, practical delivery, and cooperation between institutions serving communities.

More Than 100 Institutions Benefit From The Greening Initiative

The wider initiative benefited more than 100 institutions, including churches, clinics, schools, early childhood development centres (ECDs), tribal offices, and other community institutions.

The reach of the programme demonstrated how greening initiatives can connect environmental responsibility with the everyday needs of communities.

Trees can provide shade, support biodiversity, help protect soil, and contribute to healthier outdoor environments. Fruit trees, when properly established and maintained, can also offer future opportunities to support household and community food security.

For schools and ECD centres, tree planting can create opportunities to teach children about the natural environment through practical experience. Churches and other community institutions can similarly use their grounds to demonstrate responsible stewardship and encourage wider participation in environmental protection.

However, the work does not end when trees are distributed. Their long-term value depends on proper planting, watering, protection, and continued maintenance.

The EJD's challenge to participating institutions is therefore to nurture the trees and ensure that the benefits of the initiative extend well beyond Arbor Month.

Dffe Praises Ecumenical Coordination And Looks To The Future

Ms Samkelisiwe Lubanga, representing the DFFE's Greening and Livelihoods Implementation Support Unit in the Northern Cape, expressed enthusiasm about the coordination demonstrated through the initiative.

She was particularly encouraged by the way different churches came together under one roof, worked towards a common purpose, and cooperated constructively despite their different identities and backgrounds.

The significance of this achievement extended beyond the gathering itself. Effective collaboration among faith communities can strengthen the reach of government programmes and create opportunities to advance shared environmental objectives.

Lubanga welcomed the partnership with the EJD and expressed the hope that this kind of coordination could be extended to other Districts across the Northern Cape.

The work taking place in John Taolo Gaetsewe demonstrated the potential for churches and other stakeholders to work together in ways that support the government's environmental mandate while encouraging communities to take ownership of environmental stewardship.

For the DFFE, the intention is to strengthen this collaborative mission and explore opportunities to sustain and extend the work.

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Her remarks reinforced a central lesson from the initiative: when government and faith communities work together with a shared purpose, environmental programmes can reach beyond individual institutions and inspire broader community participation.

Faith In Action: The Contribution Of Church Leaders

The culmination at Lighthouse Worship Center also highlighted the role of church leadership in advancing environmental awareness and responsible care for creation.

Pastor Prof. Mmatsela Tongwane, who hosted the gathering, and the management of Lighthouse Worship Center provided the venue for the culmination, helping bring together participants committed to environmental stewardship.

The hospitality extended by the host church provided an important foundation for the gathering and reflected the value of churches opening their doors to initiatives that serve the wider community.

Rev. Smanga Bosman also contributed to the programme, speaking about the importance of trees and the responsibility to care for the environment.

His contribution complemented the EJD's message that environmental stewardship is not separate from Christian discipleship. Rather, it is one practical expression of faith, service, and responsibility towards God's creation.

The participation of church leaders helped connect the greening initiative to the Church's wider mission: nurturing communities that recognise the value of creation and respond to environmental challenges through meaningful action.

Their involvement also illustrated the importance of leadership in mobilising congregations and encouraging environmental responsibility beyond the walls of the church.

The EJD acknowledges Pastor Prof. Tongwane, Rev. Bosman, Lighthouse Worship Center, and the participating churches for their contribution to the wider environmental mission.

1,700 Trees: A Milestone And A Responsibility

The reported milestone of 1,700 indigenous and fruit trees distributed or planted across Mokala-Montle District by the end of September represents the collective contribution of environmental activities undertaken across the District.

It is an achievement worthy of recognition, but it also brings a responsibility to ensure that the work continues.

Environmental justice is not measured only by the number of trees distributed. It must also be reflected in the survival of those trees, the health of the surrounding environment, and the extent to which communities embrace sustainable practices.

The EJD's work therefore extends beyond planting and distribution. It includes environmental education, partnerships, awareness campaigns, and encouraging institutions to become active participants in protecting their surroundings.

The September initiative demonstrates how coordinated action can bring together different sectors around a common objective. Government provides an important institutional partnership, churches contribute their networks and leadership, and community institutions provide opportunities to translate environmental awareness into everyday practice.

The challenge now is to maintain this momentum, strengthen existing partnerships, and explore opportunities to extend successful approaches to other communities and Districts.

Caring For Creation Is A Shared Calling

The biblical foundation for environmental stewardship is clear.

Genesis 2:15 reminds us that humanity was placed in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Psalm 24:1 declares that the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord.

These scriptures challenge the Church to move beyond words and demonstrate its commitment to creation care through practical service.

The Mokala-Montle District's September Arbor Month activities offer an example of how faith communities, government, and community institutions can work together to promote environmental responsibility.

The milestone of 1,700 trees is not the end of the journey. It is an opportunity to build on the progress made, encourage more institutions to participate, and ensure that the trees already distributed and planted are protected and nurtured.

The message of "My Tree—My Oxygen" extends beyond a seasonal campaign. It reminds us that caring for trees is part of caring for the communities in which we live and the generations that will follow us.

The real measure of this achievement will not be how many trees we celebrated in September, but how many we nurture to maturity—and how many communities continue to care for God's creation long after the celebration has ended.

Mokala-Montle District has demonstrated what collective effort can achieve. The next chapter must be about sustaining the partnerships, strengthening community participation, and ensuring that environmental justice remains visible in action.

My Tree—My Oxygen. We Go Green.
We Care for Creation.
Environmental Justice is not Optional.

CONNECT WITH THE MCSA

TikTok

IMPORTANT DATES IN NOVEMBER:

16 Days of Activism on Gender Based Violence

November	06-08	Connexional Young Adult Movement Retreat	Kumkani Hintsa District
November	08	Induction of Bishop Northern Free State and Lesotho District	TBC
November	11	Connexional Chaplaincy Committee Meeting	Physical
November	11-13	Connexional Chaplaincy Retreat	TBC
November	12	Church Unity Commission Central Committee Meeting	
November	12	Connexional Organisation Head Meeting	Virtual
November	13-15	Lay President and District Lay Leaders' Leadership Development and Retreat (LP to advise)	Mokala-Montle District
November	14-15	Local Preachers Association Evangelical Revival	All Districts
November	15	Induction of Bishop Mokala-Montle District	TBC
November	18-20	Bishops' Meeting	TBC
November	19	International Men's Day	
November	22	Induction of Molopo Bishop	
November	26	Connexional Trust Properties Meeting	Vitual
November	27	Connexional Executive	TBA
November	28-30	Women's Manyano District Presidents' Retreat	Mozambique
November	29	Induction of Bishop Kumani Hintsa District	TBC
November	***29***	***1st Sunday of Advent***	

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

Ordinary Time	**Liturgical Colour: Green**
Proper 27A – **08 November, 2026** 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	
Proper 28A – **15 November, 2026** Judges 4:1-7 OR Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 – Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12 – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 – Matthew 25:14-30	
Christ the King / Reign of Christ A – **22 November, 2026** Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 – Psalm 100 OR Psalm 95:1-7a – Ephesians 1:15-23 – Matthew 25:31-46	
Advent	**Liturgical Colour: Purple**
Advent Sunday B – **29 November, 2026** Isaiah 64:1-9 – Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 – 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 – Mark 13:24-37	
Advent 2B – **06 December, 2026** Isaiah 40:1-11 – Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 – 2 Peter 3:8-15a – Mark 1:1-8	
Advent 3B – **13 December, 2026** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 – Psalm 126 OR Luke 1:47-55 – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 – John 1:6-8, 19-28	

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Rodney WK Jamieson
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.

