THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA

NEWS LETTER
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About Us:

The United Church of Zambia Synod Panorama is a monthly Synod Communications newsletter. The newsletter is aimed at giving highlights of Church activities at all levels.

For further comments and contributions, you may contact us on the following +260977805538.

**MISSION**

The United Church of Zambia Panorama is committed to contribute to the Church mission of spreading the Good News of Salvation to the Zambian people and all nations in fulfilment of Christ’s mission to the world.

**VISION**

The total Salvation of humanity, with spiritual restoration and physical well-being fully reconcile in Christ the only Saviour. For further comments and contributions, you may contact us on the following.
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We welcome you to this edition of the UCZ Panorama. We are joyous, as usual, to share with you different engagements of the Church. We are already into the third quarter in the year 2023. A few months that have passed have seen the Church involved in a number of mission activities at various church levels. Few things are worth sharing with you from management perspective.

First, the Church through the mission and Evangelism Department was recently involved in the evangelism campaign in Muchinga Presbytery. This was the second evangelism campaign this year in which Synod was involved.

The first one was spearheaded by the Copperbelt University UCZ Fellowship students, hosted by Eastern Presbytery. In both campaigns, the Church massively supported the activities and is happy with the positive results yielded.

There are many such activities being carried out by the local Churches, aimed at bringing souls to Christ. We invite the faith community to join together in supporting and praying for such mission activities.

On the ecumenical front, we had an opportunity to play host to the General Secretary of the Council for World Mission (CWM), Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum who visited the Church in June, 2023. During the visit Rev. Dr. Keum
applauded the United Church or Zambia for it’s contribution to unity, critical thinking and service. He was in the company of the CWM Mission Secretary for Economy and Ecology Rev. Damon Mkandawire,

For the UCZ, the visit was an opportunity to heighten the partnership with CWM and create sustainable networks for continued holistic mission. The UCZ will endeavor to strengthen it’s local and international mission partnership for the advancement of Christ’s mission.

The Church has recorded a milestone in securing a sustainable social security package for the Church workers who will be retiring in five years’ time. Apart from working to offset the backlog of terminal benefits, the Church will be making it’s financial contributions to the Best Life Provider who will eventually shoulder the responsibility of paying the workers.

Another area worth highlight is the implementation of the new Home empowerment facility. The program has received overwhelming support from the Congregants and we are proud to announce that this year, we have embarked on constructing six(6) houses for the Church workers scheduled to retire by December, 2023. The constructions are happening in different Presbyteries and are being supervised by the Presbyteries and Synod.

The construction of the Six(6) houses have reached an advanced stage and it is envisaged that before the end of the year, the houses should be in a habitable state. We give credit to the UCZ membership and it’s leadership at all levels for this commitment to secure accommodation for those proceeding to retirement.

For the outlook of the Church in the next few years to come, we advise our general membership and partners to find time to read the 2023 - 2027 UCZ strategic plan available on the Church’s website: http://uczsynod.org/

Finally, we would like to register gratitude to the UCZ members for the generous support towards all areas of God’s mission. May God bless you.

Rev.Chipasha Musaba
General Secretary

Rev.Chipasha Musaba
UCZ
General Secretary
The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) General Secretary Rev. Chipasha Musaba says the Church has so far paid over K2million towards terminal benefits for retired Stipendiary Church Workers between January 2022 and June 2023.

Rev. Musaba says for the past 10 years, the number of retirees has been on the rise and that church has been failing to pay retirees their dues at the point of retirement at once.

Rev. Musaba says the current outstanding figure towards retirement benefits sits at K2.5million and that the church is committed to paying all the arrears being owed to the retired Church workers to prevent the figure from accumulating.

“In order to attend to the current backlog of terminal benefits Synod Executive has appointed a committee to look at ways of raising the terminal benefit and stipends arrears at once,” he says.

The general Secretary also revealed that the church has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with an insurance company and has started making monthly contributions.

Rev. Musaba says the five-year
investment in the insurance company will help the Church begin to pay those retiring from 2027 in full.

“After wider consultations, the church decided to enter into agreement with Best Life Insurance Co. Ltd., identified as a suitable institution to provide a terminal retirement package for the UCZ employees who will be retiring in five years’ time. The move will help the church mitigate on the challenge of waiting for payment of terminal benefits for many years before they could be paid their dues, “Rev Musaba says.

And Rev Musaba has disclosed that the Church plans to construct six houses in the year 2023 from the K2.4 million raised from two home empowerment Sundays so far. “The construction of six houses has since started in Lusaka, Copperbelt and Northern Western Presbyteries.

The church is scheduled to celebrate another home empowerment Sunday in September 2023.

The funds to be raised in September will give birth to the construction of two more houses, “he says.

Meanwhile 38 students from the United Church of Zambia University (UCZU) Mindolo Campus in Kitwe are scheduled to complete their ministerial, and diaconal training by December 2023.

Dean of academic affairs at the UCZU Rev Hasting Mwenifumbo discloses that the number comprise of 26 ministerial students from the UCZ, one from the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA), nine diaconal students and two students from the Zambia police service who are being trained for chaplaincy.
JSI Research and Training Institute Limited has officially handed over prefabricated medical facilities to the United Church of Zambia (UCZ).

This follows the successful implementation of the USAID DISCOVER -Health partnership between the Church and JSI in delivering HIV, family planning Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health services to the communities around St. Luke UCZ church in Misisi compound, Chimwemwe UCZ church in Chipata compound and Bethel UCZ church in Linda compound.

In a letter addressed to the United Church of Zambia Synod Bishop, JSI/USAID DISCOVER Health Project Director Dr. Mutinta Nyumbu expressed gratitude to the Church and the communities for their support towards implementing the project.

Dr. Nyumbu said it was an honor to work with the UCZ in bringing essential health services to some of the most under-served communities through the prefabs.

“We appreciate the cordial and respectful relationships in which we operated.”
in, this contributed significantly to the success of our programs,” read the letter in part.

Dr. Nyumbu further explained that even though the prefabs were being handed over to the Church, the service delivery component will continue with support from the Ministry of Health.

And UCZ General Secretary Rev. Chipasha Musaba thanked JSI for its partnership in supporting the marginalized communities through the provision of health care services. Rev. Musaba said the Church will continue to do all it can to promote the delivery of quality health services from the prefab facilities.

Meanwhile, UCZ Health Secretary Gina Oliver thanked JSI for its contributions to the health sector.

Mrs. Oliver emphasized the importance of partnerships in addressing health care disparities especially in highly populated areas.

The successful partnership between JSI and UCZ has not only contributed to improving health outcomes but has also fostered community empowerment and engagement in health-related decision-making.

Through joint community outreach programs, they have effectively disseminated health information and encouraged behavior change, leading to healthier lifestyles and increased health-seeking behaviors.
Mbereshi Mission Hospital in Luapula Presbytery has called on UCZ members and all well-wishers to come on board and help alleviate the challenges the facility is facing.

Hospital Sister in-Charge Rhoda Chibesa says the hospital has been facing numerous material challenges, especially in the labour ward, hence making service provision difficult.

Mrs. Chibesa made the revelation when a Chililabombwe based organization, Team Beento Foundation visited and donated assorted items to the hospital on 29th July, 2023.

“I believe that with these donations we have received today, there will be no excuse of failing to deliver the needed healthcare. We would also like to assure you that the donation you have made will be put to good use, “she says.

And Team Beento Foundation Chairlady Falesi Ngwira says her organization was proud to be associate with healthcare provision.

Mrs. Ngwira says the majority of the members of her foundation are also UCZ members who feel privileged to support the Church’s provision of healthcare services.
“We thought that as we have come to celebrate Umutomboko traditional ceremony, we can also render support to the hospital by cleaning the wards and donating some materials to be used by the hospital, “says Ms. Ngwira.

Ms. Ngwira adds that the money used to buy the donated items was raised through contributions by members and the general public.

She said her organization was planning to mobilize more resources to support Mbereshi Mission Hospital.

Among the items donated include cleaning, light and heating materials.
The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) Eastern Presbytery has set 500 as target for people it hopes to convert to Christ during the Vubwi Evangelism campaign slated for October this year.

Eastern Presbytery Bishop, Rev. Jones Mutembo said the activity is part of the great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ as derived from Matthew 28:19.

Rev. Mutembo has also stressed that the initiative to conduct an Evangelism Campaign in Vubwi is an opportunity to start a UCZ Church in the area as currently the Church has no presence there. He disclosed that the Church intends to target 5000 people living in the Central

extend to other rural areas of the district.

“According to the central statistics, the total population of Vubwi is 53,665 and out of these, 80 percent stay in remote areas but we intend to begin by targeting 5000 and later spread to other parts of the district,” he said.

And the Eastern Presbytery Bishop has revealed that the campaigns will focus on the bible reading of John 8:36 and held under the theme “Freedom in Christ.”

The Vubwi Evangelism Campaigns which have been set between the 17th to 22nd October 2023 will be led by Rev Collins Bulaya, Rev Josephat Nkonde among other reverends.
As the time approaches to elect new Bishops in The United Church of Zambia’s Southern, North Western and Luapula Presbyteries, there has been a call for UCZ members and leaders in the affected Presbyteries to be prayerful and remain united.

Southern Presbytery Bishop Rev. Elias Sinkala says the UCZ is known for Unity adding that losing it would be very costly.

Bishop Sinkala says that during his tenure of office as Bishop, the Presbytery has enjoyed unity that transcends tribal barriers and appealed to leaders and members to remain united.

“It’s the Lord who choses and raises a leader amongst us, so who ever will be chosen, will need to be supported. UCZ is known for unity just like our Church tagline states “all one in Christ ‘, so for us to go forward we must remain united.” He says.

And UCZ North Western Presbytery Bishop Rev. Moses Gondwe has urged Christians to continue praying as
North Western Presbytery nears election to choose a new Bishop in September this year.

Bishop Gondwe notes that elections have a tendency of leaving a trail of gaps among Church leaders and members if not well handled, henceforth the need to be united and peaceful.

Bishop Gondwe said there can only be one leader at a time and appealed to Christians to allow God’s will to prevail.

“My appeal and prayer is that in a year like this one, we remain as one family and continue to be prayerful for the peace of God to be preserved. Our forefathers have done so much for this church, and it is our responsibility to continue their work from where they left.”

He has appealed to all the candidates to take responsibility of preserving the peace and unity the foremothers and forefathers labored for.

Luapula, Southern and North Western Presbyteries are scheduled to appoint Bishops in September this year. Those who have been nominated to the office of Bishop are: Rev. Isaac Zimba, Rev. Melvin Mubanga and Rev. Given Bwalya for Southern Presbytery; Rev. Nebby Chanda, Rev. Moses Chitundu and Rev. Howard Hamwinga for North Western Presbytery.

The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) Synod Mission and Evangelism Secretary Rev. Andrew Chulu says preparations for Zonal Minister’s Symposia are on course.

Rev. Chulu says the first one will be hosted on the Copperbelt Presbytery. He says the events will be held under the sub theme, “Wealth Creation, a Catalyst for Transformational mission,” and will focus on the Church’s annual theme, “UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES AND WHAT TO DO.”

Rev. Chulu says the first zonal meeting will comprise Copperbelt, Luapula and North Western Presbyteries and will be held from 8th - 11th August, 2023 in Ndola at UCZ Hillcrest Congregation.

He says the symposium in Ndola is part of the three Zonal Minister’s symposia slated for this year.

Rev. Chulu says the events are aimed at interrogating scriptures and theologically reflecting on the practices that have created a narrative that has perpetually escalated poverty levels in communities.

He explains that the events will focus on finding ways of using wealth to bless and transform communities around the Church.

“In this theme, looking at poverty reduction as a result of wealth creation, we ask the question, does business in
general reduce poverty or is it an excuse for someone to get rich while other get poor...?” Rev. Chulu narrates

The Mission and Evangelism Secretary notes that Christians can use business to create wealth which is scalable and sustainable.

Rev. Chulu reaffirms that business can be used by God today in new ways, yet retaining old solutions to alleviate poverty and spreading the gospel.

“Since the beginning of time, business has been ordered and blessed by God, the Creator,” he says

Other Zonal Minister’s Symposium are slated for Southern Presbytery to be held in November, 2023 and the third comprising Muchinga and Central presbyteries will take place from 12th to 15th September, 2023 in Mpika

And Rev. Chulu has indicated that the department has set 17th-20th August, 2023 as dates for the Women Christian Fellowship (WCF) choir festival to be Held at St. Paul’s Congregation in Lusaka.
The United Church of Zambia (UCZ) Lusaka Presbytery Manse Project Committee is expected to hand over the newly constructed Manse to the Presbytery Office before the year 2023 ends.

The housing project which has been constructed at an estimated sum of 1 million Kwacha has reached an advanced stage with 95 percent of works complete.

United Church of Zambia Lusaka Presbytery Bishop Rev. Dr. Lordwell Siame said most of the major works have been completed except installation of electricity. Reverend Dr. Siame said the upward adjustment in reflective tariffs by ZESCO has delayed the process of electrifying the Manse.

“The performance of the kwacha coupled with the rise in tariffs has been attributed to the delays in connecting the manse to the national power grid,” he said.

He explained that recently, a decision was agreed to have solar as alternative source of energy while raising money for
And Rev. Dr. Siame disclosed that money to erect a wall fence at the Manse is readily available and the tender has already been advertised. “We have already advertised for the construction of the wall fence, any contractor who picks it up will start building immediately,” he said.

He said moving into the Manse is of paramount importance as leaving it unoccupied would result in dilapidation.
Preparations towards the hosting of Centenary Celebrations of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) Senga Hill Mission in Northern and Butoya Conference in Western Presbyteries, respectively have reached an advanced stage.

Northern Presbytery Bishop Rev. Maybin Mulenga says the celebration will take place from 30th August to 3rd September, 2023 at Senga Hill Mission Secondary School.

Rev. Bishop Mulenga says the celebrations will be held together with the Presbytery Conference under the theme ‘Understanding the times and what to do (1Chron 12:23).

He says the Presbytery has already started printing souvenirs which include Chitenge materials for the event.

“The celebrations will be attended by all the Consistories. We have also extended invitations to the General Secretary.Rev. Chipasha Musaba, Presbytery Bishops, traditional leaders and government officials, “Bishop Mulenga says.

Formerly known as Luambazi Mission, Senga Mission was established in 1923 by Mr. Willian Govan Robertson of the London Mission Society after he temporarily settled at Kambole and Mporokoso.

And the United Church of Zambia Western Presbytery Bishop, Rev. Roy Kanchele says the Presbytery is geared to host the 2023 Butoya Conference as part of the centenary celebration.

Bishop Kanchele says over 3,000 people are expected to be in attendance during the 2023 Butoya Conference which will be held from 18th-2nd October, 2023 in Mongu.

“The event will be officially opened on Thursday, 19th October, 2023 by an invited Government dignitary and will be officially closed on 21st, October 2023 by a guest from the Royal Establishment.

Bishop Kanchele said among those expected to be in attendance are high ranking government officials, the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) and church leaders from across the country.

“We will also offload our chitenge during the Butoya ceremony so that those who would want to make traditional attire can do so in good time.

The last Butoya Conference was held from the 10th to 15th October 2018.

The event witnessed Reverend Bishop Roy Kanchele take over the reins of Western Presbytery office as Bishop from Rev Lubinda Manyando.
Rev. Morgan Mukwamba says the committee is happy with the ongoing constitution review process submissions from presbyteries.

Rev. Mukwamba says CRR has so far received submissions from Luapula, Muchinga, Northern, Southern and Western Presbyteries.

“The response from the five Presbyteries we have gone through is overwhelming, people are looking forward to seeing a new constitution that will govern the church and strengthen its image, “says the CRR Convener.

He says the committee is scheduled to visit the remaining presbyteries within the month of August. Rev. Mukwamba says a consolidation meeting will be convened soon after receiving submissions from all 10 Presbyteries to prepare a report to the Synod Executive.

Meanwhile, Eastern Presbytery Bishop Rev. Jones Mutembo says the Presbytery was ready to make submissions to the CCR committee.

“The Presbytery has received submissions from all consistories and we are scheduled to have a meeting on 9th August, 2023 in Chipata with the Synod CRR Committee where we will make submissions, “Bishop Mutembo said.

The UCZ through CRR committee has embarked on the review of the 2023 constitution, the process which is expected to end before 2024. The UCZ constitution is reviewed every after 10 years.
Those familiar with the activities of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) Women’s Christian Fellowship (WCF), formerly known as KBBK (Kabungwe ka Bana Mayo mu Bwina Kristu in Cibemba), or simply Banamoyo (Lozi) would also attest to the influence the group has, not only in the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) but also the community at large.

The WCF members in their uniforms can be spotted in market places, in hospitals, prisons, orphanages, ecumenical gathering, among many other places as they render services to people in different parts of the country.

Being a group under the UCZ Mission and Evangelism department of the church, the WCF derive their inspiration from the group motto ‘Let your light shine.’ (Matthew 5:13-16). The motto is lived out through evangelism activities and other tangible acts which demonstrate love towards God’s people. The bloused members of the group wear Black shoe and skirt, red top and belt, white collar and white Headscarf as their uniform during fellowships and other special church gatherings.
Apart from their charitable deeds which they are known for, the WCF play a crucial role in shaping societal morals of young women who are married and those yet to be.

They fulfil this task through counseling and teaching young ladies. Since their primary calling is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is not surprising to learn that a good number of the WCF members are hard-nosed preachers of the gospel and passionate singers in different choir groups. All this resonates well with their slogan ‘light and good deeds’, translated into different languages as ‘Lubuto Nemilimo (Cibemba), Liseli ni Misebezi (Lozi), or simply ‘Ni Nyali (Cewa) all. among other traditional languages.

But one would wonder when and how the group came into being. Although there are different versions about the origin of the WCF, one of the creditable accounts is one which was traced from the Motto Museum in Mbala. According to this version of the story, the group is known to have been founded in 1946 by Barbara Lea, a London Missionary Society (LMS) Evangelist who was assigned to work with women at Kawimbe mission, east of Mbala in Northern Province.

It is also attested that Barbara Lea came from Britain and was a teacher as well as a social worker by profession. At Kawimbe mission, she introduced a literacy program whose aim was to teach women how to read and write in Chi Mambwe language. In addition, she introduced regular visitations of individual homes, especially those for the needy and aged. She also introduced regular Bible studies in the villages. With the help of the village headmen, she used to mobilize all the Christian women in villages she visited. The women used to come together for prayers and she also conducted literacy classes.
Barbara Lea’s work spread to other places where LMS had established its Churches, such as Niamukolo, Kambole, Senga Hill and the whole of Mbala areas near the border with Tanzania. Her mode of transport was a bicycle.

The women’s group grew in strength and numbers, basing their activities on the basic principles of the original idea of the Mama Lea, which was to fellowship with each other and provide spiritual and charitable support to households, especially those in distress. Hence, the group became known in Bemba as “Kwafwana kwaba na mayo Bena Kristu” or “Ya Mama Yaluse” in Chi Mambwe.

Barbara Lea died in December, 2009 in Britain at the age of 91 years old. Her ashes were brought back to Zambia in 2011 and were laid to rest at Kawimbe Mission of the UCZ in Mbala, in recognition of her work, especially women.

A uniform of blue dress with a white collar and white cuffs on sleeves with white headscarf, blue belt and black shoes was eventually adopted for easy identification of those women. The color blue signified Love, Kindness and Compassion, which was the main principle of the group. The white collar, cuffs and headscarf signified the light of God in which the women
When God calls and sends one on mission, the sent one may not have an idea of the rivers to be crossed, the valleys to be traversed and the mountains likely to be climbed.

What could have kept some missionaries in past generations going was their personal conviction that God will lead them on the Journey.

This view could also be true for most servants of God in the bible such as Moses, Abraham, the prophets and the apostles who endured numerous challenges and gave themselves for mission.

This is also true when one reflects on long winding journey of Reverend Wezzie Manda who is currently serving as a Partner in Mission (PIM) in Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), South America, under the auspices of Council for World Mission (CWM).

His journey as a PIM can be traced from the year 2019 when he heard a call to go into mission. No sooner had Rev. Manda applied to CWM to be PIM in 2019 than a response with guidance and procedures was then sent to him through the then General Secretary – Rev. Dr. Peggy Mulambya Kabonde.

“When that guidance was given, of course through the Synod World Partnership’s Convener (then – Mr. Keith Waddell), I started the process following the established channel for such engagements,” Rev. Manda recalls.
The process, however, at first glance did not bring moments of anticipation for Rev. Manda because to him, it seemed like any other application process that sometimes end up in a pending tray for approval.

After all, Rev. Manda had always thought that before he could leave for mission abroad, the UCZ still needed his services. This made him remain soaked in the pastoral tasks within the church as he waited for the final feedback to his application.

‘I was not in any way desperate or in a hurry for a quick answer. My heart was ready and able to wait on God, as Isaiah 40:31 says, “But they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint,” he remarks.

Light of hope glimmered in the heart of the Manda family in 2019 when the minister received an invitation to attend Synod interviews.

News also filtered into his ears, to his excitement, that he was to go to Guyana in South America in January 2020.

Alas! The journey took longer than expected. The journey was yet to suffer another corkscrew when a new global pandemic, COVID -19, began to spread from China to the rest of the world like bush fire.

As a consequence, travel restrictions and bans were instituted in most parts of the world. Physical church gatherings, among other public gatherings were halted too, as part of the measures to contain the spread of the COVID 19 virus.

Despite the road to mission partnership now becoming longer and meandering, Rev. Manda, his wife Mary, as he fondly calls her, together with their children- Kondwani, Taonga and Walusungu - had patiently waited for two more years before their departure.

The year 2021 brought a final moment of hope when he was commissioned in 2021, after a memorandum of understanding was signed.

“The year 2021 brought a lot of joy and what looked to be the end of the long wait journey, as I signed a Memorandum of Understanding to serve under Council for World Mission (CWM) as a Partner in Mission and was commissioned on 16th May by Rev. Committee Njase and Rev. Dr. Dennis Sikazwe representing the Synod Bishop Rev. Sydney Sichilima and General Secretary Rev. Chipasha Musaba respectively, “he recalls.

The commissioning service was graced by the late Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta II, a member of the United Church of Zambia whom Rev. Manda came to know way back when the Minister used to serve in Mwandi.

Prior to their commissioning, another zigzag happened to the journey, Western Presbytery Council transferred the Minister, just like it did to other Ministers within the Presbytery to a new station.

For him, this was a surprise because it occurred few months before his scheduled departure. This called for prayer and a lot of adjustments on the part of the minister and his family.
“Whilst waiting for the next step regarding our journey, my family and I were transferred from Coillard Congregation to St. Paul’s and Libuyu Congregations within Livingstone. We looked to God for guidance and strength, and His Word was our comfort and assurance,” he recollects.

The year 2021 marked an end to the long, winging path when Rev. Manda and family left Zambia for Guyana. This September marks a second anniversary of Rev. Manda’s service as mission partner in GUC.

The Manda family are in Zambia on vacation until August, 2023. They can now reflect back on their journey and thank God through UCZ Synod officers for the Minister’s appointment as Mission partner under the CWM.

Their memories come with a sense of indebtedness to the UCZ Church leadership at all levels and the general membership for prayers and support.

The United Church of Zambia is one of the 43 members of the Council for World Mission (CWM) and has been participating in global mission through receiving and sending human resource to and from CWM partner churches. Others who are serving in diaspora as missionaries from the UCZ are: Rev. Robert Gama in Guyana; Rev. Dr. Dennis Mbita Sikazwe, Rev. Patrick Banda Rev. Thomas Phiri, Rev. Lembe Sivile and Rev. Dr. Jane Kaluba—all serving under the United Church in Jamaica and Cayman Islands (UCJCI).

Rev. Simon Muwowo is serving with the United Church of Canada, while Rev. Timothy Chamuka and Rev. Lydia Mwale are in Botswana.

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