

UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH

Greetings

Fellow Congregationalists and ecumenical partners, we bring you greetings from the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) Executive Committee meeting that was held from 14th to 17th of March, 2017 in Plumtree, Dombodema Region, Zimbabwe Synod.

It is with great joy to gather as five Synods during this 50th anniversary year of our beloved church. Having been led by the Holy Spirit to bring together the three traditions of congregationalism on the 3rd of October, 1967, our forefathers and foremothers paved a new path for us: a path from being a maintenance based church to a missional church. For the past 50 years, the UCCSA has turned cultural differences to the celebrated unity in cultural diversity. In our quest to become a missional church, we have been bringing the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and hope to the hopeless. Our mission as a church is to fortify unity through recognition of ethnic identities across the boundaries of our various nationalities.

The Executive Committee was sensitized about the effects of the natural disasters as well as politicized calamities. Recent floods which have swept through southern Africa have left many families homeless. We humbly make an appeal to members of the UCCSA to support families and individuals who have been affected by natural disasters such as the recent cyclone. Afro phobic and xenophobic attacks that we see across Southern Africa especially in South Africa are evidence of a social sin. We as the UCCSA Executive Committee further note with concern the growing phenomenon of insulated nationalism that is becoming a new trend around the world. The Bible urges us to be loving to foreigners, "so you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 10:19). We therefore encourage all our church members and ministers to not only stand up against afro-phobia, xenophobia and racism but to also do everything in their power to support victims of these prejudices. We further note the grievous and deadly prejudices against people who are differently abled. It is in times like this that we as the church should unite in our endeavour as the UCCSA to becoming an inclusive and true missional church of God.

The UCCSA Executive Committee identified corruption as a scourge that is causing economic havoc in our countries as well as discrimination against people who are differently abled and albinos. As we celebrate 50 years of our existence as UCCSA, we sturdily challenge all our local churches, regions and Synods to take a deliberate move to eradicate all efforts of corruption and corrupt practices.

Conclusion

We are looking forward to meeting and fellowshiping with you at the UCCSA 50th celebrations scheduled for Friday 29th September to 1st of October, 2017. The theme of our jubilee anniversary Assembly is "Reaching New Frontiers: Healing and Hope". Our jubilee celebrations will be hosted by the South Africa Synod of the UCCSA in Durban, South Africa (KwaZulu-Natal Region). We encourage you to make all travelling logistical plans as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

May the good Lord bless our forefathers and our foremothers who set this missional journey for us. May God inspire and empower us as we continue to labour in God's vineyards for the next 50 years and beyond. The word of God says "and I am confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will continue to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

On Behalf the Officers and UCCSA Executive.

Blessings

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Alistair Arends
UCCSA General Secretary

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