



Office Of the Bishop

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Zimbabwe Episcopal Area

Resident Bishop
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9th May 2024

**To: THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FAMILY OF THE ZIMBABWE
EPISCOPAL AREA.**

COMMUNIQUE ON THE OUTCOME OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE ON KEY AREAS OF INTEREST.

Greetings to you all United Methodist family, it is with joy that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church seating at Charlotte, North Carolina, USA from 23 April to 3 May 2024 concluded well. We thank God for the contribution made by our delegates which greatly helped to shape the outcome at the General Conference (GC2020). Let me hasten to say United Methodist Church Zimbabwe Episcopal Area's position as well articulated in the communique of the 4th of February 2022 regarding issues of human sexuality has not changed. In this respect, let me give you a brief on our position on this and other selected areas.

1. **Regionalization:** The General Conference adopted world-wide Regionalisation whose import is that each and every region will align itself to the biblical, social and legal context. As adopted by the General Conference this gives us space to come up with our own Book of Discipline in a given region. Initial discussions are that Central Conferences will be regions and as such each Central Conference will have its own Book of Discipline which ensures Zimbabwean faith and position on marriage remains intact. The initial time line is to have regionalization well refined by the end of 2026.
2. **Lifting the ban on Homosexuality** does not change our position as Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, that Homosexuality is an abomination to us Africans, and as espoused in the Bible the infallible Word of God. We United Methodists in Zimbabwe will maintain that "Homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." This is the teaching of the Bible and no resolution can change that.
3. **For us Africans in general and Zimbabweans in particular, marriage will always be defined as union between man and woman.** We will not solemnize same sex marriages as the church. United Methodist Church Marriage Officers will solemnize marriages according to Zimbabwe's Marriages Act (5.17). The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe adheres to state laws and is privileged that the Constitution of Zimbabwe does not recognize homosexuality. On this matter, it gives me much humility to share with you that our own delegate Justice Hlekani Mwayera stood firm to ensure that our position as espoused continues to be upheld.



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4. *The future of the United Methodist Church in Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular is bright.* We want to develop and continue with a United Methodist Church type of brand in Zimbabwe where others will come and learn from us about how we would have overcome all these challenges. Mind you, we have the mandate to shape our own future as the church has set the process of ratification to all these coming changes by our Annual Conferences.
5. *As United Methodists in the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, we remain committed to the Church and its wonderful heritage* which our ancestors bequeathed to us as a sacred legacy. Those who came before us loved their Church and worked hard prayerfully to live lives which honour both their Country and their God.

Finally, we have all the reason to rejoice in the spirit of Jubilee. We have among our own who have been elevated to higher positions in the administration of the church;

1. Judicial Council – Justice Hlekani Mwayera
2. Standing Committee on Central Conference Affairs – Rev. Dr. Gift Machinga
3. Commission on General Conference Issues - (Class of 2028) – Mr. Shepherd Mupemba
4. Commission on General Conference Issues – (Class of 2032) Rev. Dr. Togara Bobo
5. Commission on Archives and History – Mr. Shepherd Machuma
6. Commission on Communications – Rev. Annie Grace Chingonzo

We further celebrate with our African brothers and sisters at the granting of two more Episcopal Offices which were subsequently allocated to East Africa and DR.Congo. This outcome means Zimbabwe will elect one bishop for the Episcopal Area at the next Central Conference Session. We continue to prayerfully hope for our turn to come in the next quadrennium. I urge you to remain focused and in persistent preparation mood.

As the theme for the quadrennium has been directing us, let us remain still and know that we have a living God who is leading us.

Remain united, sing, pray, worship, visit each other, and share this testimony among ourselves.

Grace and Peace

Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa
Resident Bishop of the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area

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ZIMBABWE EPISCOPAL AREA.

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BISHOP E. K. NHIWATIWA
RESIDENT BISHOP