

# Hosting a Guest from Zimbabwe

There is much in our culture and in our daily lives that we take for granted – that we don't even think about as we go about our day-to-day living. Many of our modern surroundings are unfamiliar to first-time visitors. Because of this, you may find the following information helpful when hosting a guest from Zimbabwe.

## Helping Your Guest Feel At Home . . .



- **Listen carefully.** Your guest's accent is different from what we're used to. Feel free to ask him/her to repeat something you don't understand.
- **Speak clearly.** Your accent and the words you use may be difficult or unfamiliar to your guest. You may need to explain a few words or phrases. Do try to learn a few words in Shona – the Zimbabweans will really appreciate it!
- **Your guest is a first-time visitor to the US**, so when you show your guest around your home, be specific about how to use bedroom and bathroom light and lamp switches, shower and water faucets, kitchen appliances, window shades, the alarm clock, etc. Let your guest know that the towel and face cloth laid out on the sink or on the bed is for his/her use.
- **Please make up a small gift basket or tote bag for your guest.** We have put together a list of items we think will be useful to your guest. Consider asking church folks to help gather these items. We will hand these out at the orientation meeting.
- **If your guest presents you with a gift**, accept it graciously. Allow your guest the opportunity to give. Please resist the temptation to overwhelm your guest with gifts. Gifts to your partner church are appropriate – a Bible, a banner, a prayer shawl, photos of your church (include a framed photo to hang in the church in Zimbabwe), a chalice for communion, a stole for the pastor, etc. And lots of letters! Individual gifts to your guest should be modest. Remember, they are receiving the incredible gift of travel to the USA!
- **Medical care will be provided by several physicians in NH.** Guests will also have health care insurance while they are here. If there is an emergency, use the hospital emergency room; for all other needs please consult the physicians on our list. Notify Richard or Kathy in the event of any medical needs.



- **Prayer is an integral part of your guest's daily life.** Prayer is said before every meal in Zimbabwe. Family members gather together for prayer at the end of a long day. Prayer may be said at various times throughout the day as blessings are recognized and hopes and concerns are voiced. Hosts are encouraged to be themselves, but to also be aware that prayer is a high priority in your guest's every-day life. And do invite your guest to pray. They will be honored to do so.



### Meals . . .

- Zimbabweans eat differently than we do, but they are here to experience what we eat, so plan your usual menu. We encourage you to limit the amount of processed foods and have plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables on hand. Zimbabweans drink tea (usually with milk) but they may want coffee! Peanut butter is a reliable staple. Be sure to explain what you are serving – ask if they've eaten it before. You can be sure they will quickly find some new favorites!
- Provide your guest with water/water bottle for the road.
- Most Zimbabwean Christians do not drink alcohol, however if you enjoy a glass of wine with dinner, offer your guest a glass.

### Conversations . . .

- Allow plenty of time for rest and quiet conversation. Don't keep your guest busy every minute. Allow for an early bedtime, especially in the first few days.
- When driving, point out landmarks and share the stories that go with them.
- Be open to talking frankly about church life, one's spiritual journey, etc.
- Approach discussions about the political situation in Zimbabwe with caution and sensitivity. Respect your guest's responses – he or she may or may not be comfortable talking about these issues.
- When your guest talks about efforts to raise money for a project in his/her church or village, listen and ask questions. Share similar conversations about efforts in your own church or community to raise money for various projects. Talk about and visit local non-profit agencies that your church engages in to help those in need. Ask your guest about endeavors that they're involved with in their community to help those in need. Do not respond with funds for their projects. Talk with us first. The UCCZ and the NH Conference UCC have a covenant that includes guidelines around money and several suggested areas of giving that both churches have agreed on. Our Ways to Give sheet will also help guide your conversation. We ask that you consult with Rev. Richard Slater and the Ukama Mission Group around all money issues.

### Miscellaneous . . .

- Ask your guest if he/she has any laundry that needs to be done.
- If you are able, please print some photos from your guest's camera.
- Have a suitcase available that may go to Zimbabwe – they'll collect lots of stuff!
- Your guest may want to check email and/or phone home. Calls to Zimbabwe are very expensive unless you purchase an international phone card.

Your hosting experience will be unique and may include some surprises! Enjoy and make the most of your time together! Contact us with any questions or concerns.

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