President John Matiza’s Inaugural Speech

Date: 25 April 2021

Venue: Musirizwi Ruwadzano Center

Salutation

The outgoing President and my Predecessor Rev ETC Ngadziore naMai
The Vice President Rev F. Mutsumbeyi naMai
Former Presidents Rev Dr E Matuvhunye & Rev Dr C Kuchera
The Church Admin Rev D. Makoto & Amai
Superintendents Rev L Simango & Amai, Rev G. Dhundu & Amai, Rev S. Mhlanga naMai
Former Superintendents
All Ministers & Senior Ministers nanaMai nanaBaba
Synod Moderator and Conference Moderators
Synod Officers & Conference Officers
Church Deacons
All UCCZ members
All invited Guests from other Denominations
Our Guest Preacher Rev O. Tapera UBC
Our Guest of Honor Rev Dr K. Gondongwe
Masabhuiku edu aripano
Madzishe edu aripano
Brothers and Sisters
Introduction

In a very special way, allow me to acknowledge with gratitude in my heart the 8 years of Presidential services of Rev ETC Ngadziore naMai. Thank you for your dedication and faithful service for this great Denomination and the community at large. Please continue to be part of our journey as we embark on the huge task ahead of us. Let me take this opportunity to thank everybody here present, those at home, our Partners within the country and those outside the country who sacrificially serve this Denomination to be where we are today.

Today I have been installed as the President of this Denomination. I am here before you. Thank you all for putting your confidence in me to lead this great Denomination for the next four years. God has given me the opportunity to shepherd and take this church to another level. We have gone through a difficult period of preparing for elections. We were all wounded in one way or the other. Now the election period is over, this is the time to come together as brothers and sisters as we embark on building our beloved church to another level for the glory of God.

What is my vision for the Denomination?

1. Mission & Evangelism

Evangelism remain our key drive for the Denomination. This remain the responsibility of our three Conferences. However, to enhance coordination, between our Conferences and the Synod, we will open a Mission and Evangelism Desk. The Department will oversee and provide special services to people in the established areas like Kakunga, Chidodo, Mola, Nyagadzi and Mhondoro. We will increase our visibility in the area of evangelism in our schools, hospitals and farms. We will train chaplains and appoint them in all our institutions.

Our Evangelism drive will go beyond our boarders to countries like South Africa, United Kingdom, Malawi, Botswana, Australia etc. We thank God that we have already established churches in United Kingdom and South Africa. We are looking forward to appoint Pastors to South Africa and United Kingdom soon after liaising with the respective churches.

2. Councils

(a) Education: Beside offering education to the community, as a Church we should be proactive in using our schools as a bridge for evangelism. We are looking forward to combine schools closer to each other so that they are overseen by one Chaplin. As a Church our Institutions should represent what we believe.

(b) Agriculture: The United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe is rich with vast land resources conducive for both crop and animal husbandry. As a Church we want to make use of our land resources in order to make a difference through empowering marginalized communities by creating employment. Mitigating poverty through corporate responsibility. Advancing the Gospel through export revenues generated from the utilization of our land resources.

(c) Medical: Beside offering health to the community, our hospitals and clinics remain bridges for evangelism. We want to strengthen our evangelism activities within our hospitals and clinics. We will have Chaplains assigned to our hospitals and clinics. Our hospitals and clinics should represent what the United Church of Christ believe.
Staff Development

We will introduce internal and external staff development. This is vital because it can help to ensure that our staff maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills needed to deliver a professional service. Ongoing training and development program will allow us to find and address any weaknesses within our staff members.

3. Recruitment of Ministerial Ministers
The growth of our Church does not correspond with the number of ministerial candidates at both United Theological College and Rusitu Bible College where our ministers are trained. Therefore, we will put more effort in our recruitment drive for ministerial candidates. We will introduce fundraising initiatives like Sponsor a Student Program. This is where individuals, Churches and Partners form a bond with the Church to support a student at one of our colleges.

4. Retired Ministers
We are all aware that our Retired Ministers lost all their savings during the dollarization period. It is our responsibility as a Church to see to it that our Retired Ministers are looked after. We are looking forward to introduce programs like Sponsor a Retired Minister Program. This is where we link our Retired Ministers with Partners within our churches or outside. We will continue with programs like Friends of Retired Ministers which was introduced by Northern Conference Ruwadzano Moderator Mrs L Ngorima.

5. Ecumenism
We cannot operate in isolation as a Church; therefore, we will put more extra effort to relate with our Partners locally and internationally. We will market the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and what we believe to other like-minded organizations and Churches.

6. Infrastructure Development
We are looking forward to introduce the ‘HUMWE CONCEPT’ which is practiced in the United Methodist Church. We have so many unfinished projects in all our three Conferences. The Humwe concept will bring us together from all our Conferences and embark on one project at a time. We are a united church and whatever we are doing is not for the glorification of individual Churches or Councils but for the glory of God.

In terms of infrastructure development, first we need to complete the unfinished structures like, the Head Office, Waterview, churches and parsonages which are already under construction. Secondly, most of our infrastructures in our mission schools are in a dilapidated condition. Some of the infrastructures need to be renovated but others need to be pulled down in order to start new buildings. We will take stock of all our UCCZ properties as we strive in upgrading them to suit the 21st century period.

Thirdly, we have major projects like the Gazaland University. A research is already underway of how best we can link Gazaland University with other universities locally and internationally. During my tenure of office, we will see to it that the Charter is passed and the work is starting.
Fourthly, we will continue to support National Ruwadzano to complete their hall at Musirizwi. We will help National Ruwadzano in managing the Musirizwi Center as it becomes the UCCZ hub in the Eastern Conference.

Fifthly, we will support all the three Conferences as they battle to build their Conference Centers. The Eastern and Northern Conferences have already some Centers which are under construction. The Western Conference is still looking for a center in Gweru or Masvingo.

7. **Spiritual Councils**
   
   (a) **Ruwadzano**: My vision is to see Ruwadzano having a full-time Minister who will run the Council on daily basis. This is our biggest Spiritual Council in UCCZ and surely there is need to nurture these women to greater heights both spiritually and physically.
   
   (b) **Volunteers**: Just like Ruwadzano, I want to see Voluneers having their own Minister who will be responsible for the day today running of the Council. I want to see Volunteers having their own center in the central town of Masvingo. My desire and wish is to see the Volunteers taking the bigger role in our evangelism endeavors assisted by Lay Evangelists.
   
   (c) **Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF)**: My desire is to see the CYF taking the bigger role in all the activities of the Church. In order to see the revival of this Group, we need a full-time Minister well equipped in youth ministry. The high unemployment rate has affected most of our Youths in Zimbabwe, the Youth Minister should be creative in formulating projects in our three Conferences which can help our Youths.
   
   (d) **Sunday School**: During my tenue of office, I want to see a Sunday School Coordinator who will be in charge of our Sunday School at Synod level. The Director will be responsible for coordinating Sunday School Programs in our three Conferences in liaison with our Conference Superintendents. My desire is to see uniformity in terms of the material we are teaching our children.

8. **Men’s Fellowship**
   
   Regarding Men’s Fellowship, my desire is to see this Group being coordinated at national level. Like any other Spiritual Council Men’s Fellowship should have their own Minister who is responsible for coordinating their programs.

9. **Women of Virtue.**
   
   My desire is to see Women of Virtue Group becoming more vibrant and reaching out to all our Conferences. Our next target is to establish a constitution and a National Committee.

**Chipinge College of Horticulture**

10. My desire is to see Chipinge College of Horticulture attain its former glory in Zimbabwe and Africa. Most of its graduates are managers in big companies. Some of them have started their own companies. We are looking forward to establish what is happening at Tongogara and how we can help the college together to reach its potential. We will bring in experts who can help us and give us ideas of how we can take the college forward. We will also bring in former students who graduated at Chipinge College of Horticulture in order for them to give us insight of the old good days at the
College. The success of this project will depend on the cooperation of the leadership and staff of Chipinge College of Horticulture.

11. Christian Education & Stewardship Desk
Our giving remains a big concern as a Denomination, therefore, I am looking forward to create a Christian Education & Stewardship Desk. The Christian Education & Stewardship Coordinator will be responsible for organizing seminars in all our three Conferences teaching people to give and taking care of the resources God has given us.

12. Information Desk
Managing communication is critical to the success of our Church. During my tenure of office, I am looking forward to have an Information Desk to improve our communication as a Church. We need to be proactive and keep members informed and engaged.

13. Project Officer’s Desk
We are running so many projects as a Church, therefore, there is need to have a Project Officer’s Desk. The Project Officer will be responsible to maintain a clear overview of all current work and projects. He/she will ensure that current and future projects are aligned with the strategy as well as organizing fundraising activities.

14. Conclusion
As I conclude, I am calling upon every member of this Church, from Sunday School, Christian Youth Fellowship, Ruwadzano, Volunteers, Men’s Fellowship, Ministers and their spouses and our dear Partners to come on board and work as a team to develop this Church to another level. It is not the responsibility of the President alone but for each one of us as we endeavor to glorify God during our time.

I thank you

Rev John Matiza
UCCZ President