

**UKAMA/PARTNERSHIP COVENANT: A LIVING DOCUMENT BETWEEN  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE  
AND  
THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

(Approved November 2002, revised July 2006 and November 2012)

**VISION**

*“That They May All Be One” John 17:21*

**MISSION**

The mission of our Ukama/Partnership is to share with each other and to learn from each other about the spiritual, mental and physical needs of our members and to grow together in our faithful response to our call to witness and ministry.

**BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ . . . Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.” (I Corinthians 12:12, 14 NRSV)

The Ukama/Partnership between the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ) and the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ (NHCUCC) is based primarily in the call by God to be brothers and sisters in Christ, and therefore, to be friends in Christ. It is based secondarily in the historical traditions of the Congregational missionaries who left New England to bring the Gospel to Zimbabwe, evidenced in our common patterns of worship, the office of Deacons, and the office of Pastor in our churches.

**THE “UKAMA” CONCEPT**

The “ukama” concept embraces friendship and sharing each other’s joys and burdens. In most cases ukama is celebrated and realized to be fruitful when people share a meal together - hence the Shona saying: (ukama igasva hunozadziswa nokudya), translated “the relationship is not complete until food is shared together”.

In naming our relationship "Ukama/Partnership", we intend to bring about a deeper understanding that we are all children of God, regardless of who we are, where we are or what we are doing. Ukama/Partnership is understood as a relationship in which each partner enters as an equal into common ministry. Each partner is expected to bring respect and desire to enter the lives of the other, not as a benefactor nor as a recipient, but as equals with strengths and needs that enhance the even growth of the relationship.

Ukama/Partnership is not conditional. It has no time limit as long as hama (relatives) are there or alive. Ukama embraces the joys, successes, achievements, pains, sufferings, failures, concerns, and problems of the other. It is like the Biblical call to bear one another’s burdens (takuriranai mitoro) (Galatians 6:2).

In the context of koinonia - communion or fellowship, “ukama hwechikristu” -

Ukama/relationship/koinonia/fellowship leads to diakonia - which is Christian service or fellowship with one another.

**OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

The Ukama/Partnership is a relationship between the three conferences of the UCCZ and the NHCUCC. It is primarily lived out in partnerships between paired local churches of the UCCZ and the NHCUCC. The UCCZ and the NHCUCC shall establish and maintain Ukama/Partnership committees that are broadly representative and are accountable to their appropriate governing bodies.

**Responsibilities of the Ukama/Partnership committees**

1. Establishing and reviewing programs and policies pertaining to Ukama/Partnership.
2. Receiving and considering applications from churches to establish Ukama/Partnerships.

3. Sharing information and experiences such as special events, services, video and audio tapes, newsletters, reports, and letters. Other programs are also encouraged, such as stewardship development, Christian Education projects, development projects, and experiential programs for mutual support and education.
4. Organizing exchange visits, work camps, pastoral exchanges, or visiting lectureships at theological seminaries.
5. Exchanging suggestions, guidance, and advice on matters pertaining to our mutual relationship.
6. Communicating regularly between the two partnership committees via minutes of meetings, email, face-to-face, newsletters, or by website.
7. Developing and maintaining a common internet web site containing helpful information about the Ukama/Partnership. The URL for this web site is <http://www.ukama.org>.
8. Informing the UCCZ Synod, New Hampshire Conference, and Global Ministries of Ukama/Partnership activities.
9. Common Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ is a full partner in this Ukama/Partnership. In that spirit, both the UCCZ and NHCUCC commit themselves to communicating and consulting with them regularly.

### **Responsibilities of the local church**

1. Abiding by this covenant.
2. Communicating regularly with the partnered church to keep the relationship thriving.
3. Communicating partnership news within their own congregation. Sharing of news from personal correspondences is encouraged.
4. Consulting the Ukama/Partnership committees about program development, financial programs, and travel.
5. Planning church-to-church exchanges in consultation with the respective Ukama/Partnership committees.

### **OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR UKAMA/PARTNERSHIP**

As the UCCZ and the NHCUCC, we expect:

1. To give and receive spiritual nourishment through prayer, moral support in times of joy, sorrow, hardships, and celebrations.
2. To encourage exchange visits in several ways. Trips should be planned well in advance and in consultation with the Ukama/Partnership committees, coordinators, and Conference Superintendents. These ways include:
  - a. Conference and Synod events such as Annual Meetings (NHCUCC), Annual General Meetings (UCCZ), or other important events in the life of the church.
  - b. Visits between partnered churches.
  - c. Professional personnel exchanges of pastors, theological lecturers, researchers, doctors, nurses, teachers, trades-people, and others.
3. We expect to share in special events such as an annual Ukama/Partnership "Big" Sunday celebration in Zimbabwe and New Hampshire. This event will be held in October to commemorate the establishment of the first mission station in Zimbabwe by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission. This event coincides with Common Global Ministries "Africa Partnership Sunday". Offerings for the Ukama/Partnership will be encouraged.
4. We expect to share in the areas of religious, theological, social, economic, technological and cultural information.
5. Our mutual relationship offers opportunities and challenges for understanding and learning from one another. We expect an Ukama/Partnership that recognizes that our cultural patterns differ
6. We expect transparency, honesty, and mutual accountability in our Ukama/Partnership. We encourage direct and complete communication where the two parties take responsibility for their own needs and concerns.

7. Should unrest occur within our churches, we expect partners to pray for one another and offer assistance.
8. Ukama/Partnership should be based on mutual sharing of information and of experiences such as special events and services.

### **SHARING RESOURCES**

The primary purpose of the Ukama/Partnership is to create relationships of mutual support for each other. In a number of Paul's letters to young churches, he opens by thanking God for each church, and for their faith and their love for each other. Then he goes on to ask for their prayers. Mutual support begins with praying for each other. However, our mutual caring for each other inevitably leads to a desire to reach out to each other in more tangible ways. Although Paul states in Philippians 4:12-14 that he is content whether rich or poor, nonetheless he gratefully accepts the help that is offered. In II Corinthians 8:1-2 and in Romans 15:26-27 he points out how the Macedonians, although very poor, were led to share what they had very generously because of their joy in their faith. Both spiritual blessings and material blessings can be shared.

We acknowledge that we are gifted differently and this affects our walk together in faith. We are coming to an understanding through the meaning of "ukama – the little we have we share", that we are called to support one another, especially when a part of the family is in a time of struggle.

We acknowledge that there is a struggle with giving and receiving – how much, when, who is able. We celebrate the enabling power that money has to do many wonderful things, even as we recognize its potential problems.

Several ways have been established to support the mission and ministries of the UCCZ. Individuals and churches in New Hampshire and in Zimbabwe are encouraged to support churches in the UCCZ by contributing to one or more of the following funds. In these funds, decisions about distribution are made primarily by the UCCZ Ukama Committee, so that the money is allocated where it is most needed. We acknowledge the great desire to help one's partner church and therefore two of the funds allow for targeted giving.

1. The Local Church Construction Grant Fund (LCCGF) – The purpose of the fund is to strengthen the ministry of the UCCZ through Conferences and local churches through the construction of church buildings, parsonages, church halls, bore holes or other appropriate projects. Up to 80% of a donation may be designated by a donor for a specific project, 10% will be used for monitoring and evaluation, and 10% will be allocated by the UCCZ Ukama committee to benefit other churches.
2. The Fund to Support Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living with AIDS –This provides care for children affected by AIDS, including basic support and educational fees for HIV/AIDS-affected orphans. Up to 80% of a donation may be designated by a donor for a specific church or conference, 10% will be used for monitoring and evaluation, and 10% will be allocated by the UCCZ Ukama committee to care for other children.
3. The Education Fund supports student/school expenses including those for higher education (post-secondary trade schools, colleges and university).
4. The Food Security Fund makes funds available for staples such as maize meal and cooking oil as well as seeds or tools.
5. The Water Fund assists in drilling bore holes and may also help to repair or replace damaged infrastructure.
6. Benjamin C.L. Crosby Scholarship fund. This fund provides assistance with education at the United Theological Seminary in Zimbabwe while honoring the Rev. Ben Crosby, NHC-UCC Conference Minister and advisor to the Ukama/Partnership from 1996 to 2003.

To contribute to any of these funds, send a check to the Finance Office at the New Hampshire Conference, 140 Sheep Davis Road, Pembroke, NH 03275, or to UCCZ,

Ukama/Partnership Committee, 30/32 Second Avenue, Parktown, PO Box W116, Waterfalls, Harare, Zimbabwe. On the memo line, write "Ukama" and the fund you wish to support.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### **A. Overall principles:**

1. Justice, fairness, and equity are key in all decisions regarding the sharing of resources.
2. We strive to foster mutual accountability with respect, transparency and trust.
3. We seek to benefit the entire UCC church communities of New Hampshire and Zimbabwe. When a program will benefit a single local church, it will be considered in the context of the entire Ukama/Partnership.
4. All money shall flow through the respective Ukama/Partnership committees, which have a broad and unique perspective on both needs and resources.

### **B. To implement these principles:**

1. Financial mechanisms will be set up through financial institutions mutually acceptable to the two Ukama/Partnership committees. The committees will maintain mutual involvement for the sake of both accountability and management.
2. All monetary contributions will focus upon projects that are identified and endorsed by the two Ukama/Partnership committees for the benefit of the Ukama/Partnership at the local church level as well as the Conference to Synod relationship.
3. Designated funds will be established through the mutual agreement of the two Ukama/Partnership committees in consultation with the NHC-UCC and UCCZ Synod.
4. All undesignated contributions will be allocated at the mutual discretion of the two Ukama/Partnership committees.
5. In the event of an emergency, confirmation should come from the New Hampshire Conference or the UCCZ Synod. The disbursement of any funds, supplies, or equipment shall take place through and pending approval by the Ukama/Partnership committees.
6. Global Ministries will be informed of any sharing of financial resources between the New Hampshire Conference and the UCCZ that does not flow through the Global Ministries office.

### **C. Procedures for Relief Funding and Program Development: (delete this section?)**

Sufficient flexibility in this for us to respond to whatever new situation arises?

1. Disaster Relief Funding: Any relief efforts will be identified and communicated by the Ukama/Partnership Coordinator of the affected region in consultation with the Ukama/Partnership Committee, the Ukama/Partnership Chairperson (UCCZ), and the Church Superintendents (UCCZ). If disasters occur in Zimbabwe, funds from New Hampshire will be received by the New Hampshire Conference and will be forwarded promptly through Global Ministries or other identified agency. Funds from Zimbabwe will be received by the UCCZ Synod.
2. Program Development and Funding: Mutual development projects may be identified as situations warrant. All such programs needing funding must be officially identified and approved and prioritized by both Ukama/Partnership Committees in consultation with the NHC-UCC and UCCZ Synod.

## **UKAMA/PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNT**

A separate joint account of the three Conferences of the UCCZ will be maintained for the purposes of depositing and disbursing all funds received from the New Hampshire Conference-UCC and UCCZ.

The name of the account designated for Ukama/Partnership is “UCCZ Conferences Ukama Fund”. The UCCZ Ukama Committee will administer all the funds. All designated funds will be used as such while the two Ukama/Partnership committees will agree on the use of all undesignated funds.

The Ukama Committee chairperson, coordinator and treasurer will be signatories of the Fund.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Ukama/Partnership is a spiritual journey together. Friends invite friends to walk with them, sit with them, eat with them, listen to one another, share the joys and concerns of one another, wait on the flooded rivers together, and cross the bridges together. This spirit is captured by the African theologian John Mbiti when he said “I am because you are, since you are therefore I am.” We are members of Christ’s family sitting around the fire together, sitting around the fellowship table together.

This document shall be available in printable form on the resources page of this Web site: <http://www.ukama.org/policies.html>.

### **APPENDICES**

Glossary of terms.

List of previous revisions.

Organizational structures of the UCCZ and NHC-UCC as they relate to Ukama.

History of the Ukama/Partnership.