
Worship Resources for Ukama Partnership Sunday, October 25, 2020

Dear Ukama Partnership Friends,

What a different world it is since our last Ukama Sunday! Then, we assumed that our churches were worshipping in person. This year, our worship is much more likely to be online. Then, we offered help for us to sing songs in Shona. This year, if we are worshipping in person, we are discouraging singing altogether.

What hasn't changed is that our Ukama, our relationship, with the people of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, is very much worth celebrating. We just need to figure out how to celebrate, given our radically different circumstances.

We try to celebrate Ukama Sunday as close as possible to the anniversary date of the establishing of the United Church in Zimbabwe, which took place Oct 19, 1893. We moved the date to October 25 because the NH Conference is offering an online worship on October 18 as part of our Conference's Annual Meeting, and we suspect that many of our churches will use that as their worship on the 18th. Of course, you can choose the day. Our partners in the UCCZ know that the 'official' day for us is the 25th.

Rev. Frederick Thodhana, a pastor of the UCCZ, has released an album in 2019 which is accessible on YouTube. The link below connects to that album. On the sidebar, the songs are presented individually. Some are titled hymn numbers corresponding to the UCCZ hymnal! I tried a few ways to insert one of these songs in a PowerPoint and have yet to succeed. You may know someone who is more technologically proficient than I. If you do figure it out, send the solution to the rest of us.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U18EEYnlYw8&feature=youtu.be>

Below you'll find the link to Dr. Menson Mpofo's short video regarding the food appeal which we shared back in May. Our partners in Zimbabwe hope to send more current info as text or video, but we don't have those resources in hand yet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiB46sLg9rs>

The Revised Common Lectionary for October 25th, the standout scripture is Matthew 22:34-46—"Love the Lord your God. . . and love your neighbor as yourself." The 1 Thess 2:1-8 text recalls Paul's missionary work with the Thessalonians. While the old history of our relationship with UCCZ is us sending missionaries there, Ukama acknowledges that the mission flows both ways – we have been evangelized by our *hama* in Zimbabwe. The last verse in that passage fits us perfectly—"So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the Gospel of God but also our very selves, because you have become very dear to us."

We hope that you will receive an offering for the 2020 Food Insecurity Appeal. We sent the flier about that to all Ukama churches a few weeks ago. The need there is great and urgent. You can send checks to the New Hampshire Conference (140 Sheep Davis Road, Pembroke, NH 03275) with Ukama Food Project in the memo.

Blessings be with you as you celebrate our Ukama Partnership through your worship and prayers this October (or November or any time of your choosing). Your Ukama Mission Group will be very happy to hear of your meaningful worship should you desire to share with me the ways that you honor our Ukama Partnership in your local church worship services.

In peace,

Rev. David Keller

Chairperson, Ukama Mission Group

davidandlindy@myfairpoint.net

Some Prayer Suggestions:

This prayer comes from the World Council of Churches Prayer Cycle

(<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle/week-22-botswana-zimbabwe>)

Prayer from Zimbabwe

Lord God,
we give you thanks for sending your only Son to give us life.
In the midst of wealth we are crushed by poverty,
and while we are offered Christ-life in all its fullness,
we are surrounded by disease, death and destruction.
We are tempted to despair, and yet keep hoping,
knowing that you care.
At times we weep silent tears, and cry out with deep emotion.
We come to you, our only hope and refuge.
Thank you for the gift of laughter,
even when the going is tough.
With you, O Lord, we may be troubled but not destroyed.

By Rev. Farai Chirisa, Zimbabwe. www.ctal.org.uk/zimbabwe.htm

Unison Prayer (from Zimbabwe)

Open my eyes that they may see the deepest needs of the people; move my hands that they may feed the hungry; touch my heart that it may bring warmth to the despairing; teach me the generosity that welcomes strangers; let me share my possessions to clothe the naked; give me the care that strengthens the sick; make me share in the quest to set the prisoner free. In sharing our anxieties and our love, our poverty and our prosperity, we partake of your divine presence.

(adapted from *A Procession of Prayers*, ed. John Carden, c. 1998 by World Council of Churches Publications.)

An Opening Prayer (Africa) From Janet Morley, *Bread of Tomorrow*, Orbis Books

Holy One, enlarge my heart,
that it may be big enough to receive the greatness of your love.
Holy One, stretch my heart,
that it may take into it all those,
who with me around the world, believe in Jesus Christ.
Then stretch it again
that it may take into it all those who do not know Christ,
but who are my brothers and sisters because I know him.
And stretch it still, that it may take in all those
who are not lovely in my eyes
and those hands I do not want to touch.
Enlarge my heart, O God, through Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen

Prayer of Dedication: (Zimbabwe) from Maren Tirabassi's *Gifts of Many Cultures*

God of All Good, our gifts we bring to you. May they be multiplied and blessed, as the fish and the loaves were. Little though our offering is, but meaningful in love, may it be. May they be received as tokens of our love. Amen.

Some Song Suggestions:

Tinotenda Jesu is a song from Zimbabwe that has blessed many an Ukama gathering. The simplicity of sentiment (Thank You Jesus, Alleluia, Amen) and ease of singing can bless the whole congregation. The words are:

Tinotenda Jesu. Tinotenda Jesu. Tinotenda Jesu. Alleluia, Amen.

Thank you Jesus, Amen. Thank You Jesus, Amen. Thank you Jesus, Amen. Alleluia, Amen.

Another simple song for worship and a good introit is "Uyai Mose." You may have this as "Come All You People" in a Hymnal or Praise Song book on your shelves. It was also included in "Come All You People: Shorter Songs for Worship" and "Sing with the World" from the Iona Community. You can find many versions of this on YouTube if you would like to hear it or learn it orally. The words are:

Shona:

Uyai mose, tinamate Mwari;

Uyai mose, tinamate Mwari;

Uyai mose, tinamate Mwari;

Uyai mose zvino.

English:

Come all you people, Come and praise your Maker.

Come all you people, Come and praise your Maker.

Come all you people, Come and praise your Maker.

Come now and worship the Lord.

Additionally, at the end of each worship service in Zimbabwe, the congregation sings the benediction together. Just saying it together connects us with our family in Zimbabwe.

*May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart,
Be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.*

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Some Ritual/Custom Suggestions:

Here are some ritual suggestions for the celebration, adapted for the way we've been worshiping during the pandemic:

Hand washing is an act of hospitality among members of the churches and a ritual that begins every church meal. Offering it in the traditional is probably not a covid-safe practice. But how about someone offering hand sanitizer to worshipers as they enter the church? Or, if your worship is online, you could show a pitcher, towel, and basin, maybe have one pair offer water and wash hands as your worship opens.

Offering: In UCCZ churches, the offering is gathered up by a number of people who walk through the congregation and receive it in bags, baskets, bowls, and even on open hymn books or Bibles. Sometimes it is brought forward, often with people dancing! At many of the churches the offering is counted as it is received, so that the amount given can be announced and celebrated.

Even in churches which are offering in-person worship, the offering is not received by ushers passing the plate. But the offering may be announced. So, as it is announced, have someone stand with an open Bible, maybe even lay a bill in it.

Because this year we are asking for support for our conference-wide food insecurity appeal, you might want to insert some images in your live feed during the offering time. I put “drought in Zimbabwe images” in my search engine, which yielded a wide array of potentially useful photos.

Worship in Zimbabwe is filled with singing and dancing, accompanied by drumming and hoshos (gourd-like seed-filled shakers). Most every aspect of worship is wrapped in song. Generally, one person simply begins singing, and the others will join in on the hymn. And the dancing also seems to begin spontaneously, until all are in the act! It seems that most know all the verses to all the hymns! Not everyone has a hymnal. When someone is asked to pray, he or she will usually sing a verse of a hymn before praying. You may choose to include drums and rhythm instruments in your hymn singing.

BUT: I found this video “The Blessing Zimbabwe” which moved me to tears. No dancing, but what a benediction!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OA1tVs7VNcY>

Which suggests that, if your church’s Ukama committee or person hunts around, you’ll probably find some great resources for making Ukama Sunday a truly moving experience. Get going! Try stuff! And let your Ukama Mission Group know if there’s ways we can help, or if there’s resources you found and would like to share with others.

I do have pdf’s of some Shona hymns which, if you ask me, I can send. Given restrictions on singing, they may not be useful this year.

You can email me personally at davidandlindy@myfairpoint.net, or the Mission Group at ukamaboard@nhcucc.org.

May God continue to bless our Ukama, and our churches as we celebrate this rich relationship.

Peace,

David Keller, for the UMG