
Worship Resources for Ukama Partnership Sunday, October 19, 2025

Dear Ukama Partnership Friends,

Grace and peace to you from your Ukama Mission Group, which continues to support the many ways that our Ukama with the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe continue to bless the people and the congregations participating in it, both here in New Hampshire and in Zimbabwe.

We realize that many partners do not have contact info for their partner church. If you want contact information for your partner church's pastor or Ukama Chairperson, email ukama@nhcucc.org. We'll send you the most current contact. Our friends in Zimbabwe use Whatsapp much more than email; if you don't have Whatsapp, it is worth adding to your mobile phone.

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. The Ukama Mission Group agreed that our official 2024 Ukama Sunday will be October 19. Of course, each of our Ukama congregations can choose the day that works best for you. Our partners in the UCCZ will know that the 'official' day for us is the 19th.

Often, celebrating Ukama Sunday here includes an invitation to receive an offering designed to address a specific need that the UCCZ has identified. Soon, we will hear from UCCZ leadership what they think the offering should support. It's not official yet, but we anticipate that rebuilding Daisy Dube Children's Home will be the ministry we will be supporting. Please let the UMG know if you're planning to support this appeal – we will work with you to ensure your gifts get to the UCCZ.

Our NH Churches have celebrated Ukama Sunday in a variety of ways. Further down this document you will find some of the traditional options, which remain good (and simple) ways to honor our relationship. Improved connection through the internet is opening a variety of other ways to honor the relationship. We've added some ideas using the internet to the list.

Blessings be with you as you celebrate our Ukama Partnership through your worship and prayers. Your Ukama Mission Group will be very happy to hear how you're celebrating this relationship. Especially if you're doing something that is innovating technology-wise, do let us know, and share sufficient details so that we can share that with other Ukama churches.

For more resources and answers (we hope!) to questions you might have, send an email to ukama@nhcucc.org.

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

HERE'S SOME IDEAS:

There are lots of creative ways to connect with your partner in the UCCZ. The UMG plans to record and distribute a general greeting from the president of the UCCZ, the Rev John Matiza, available to anyone who wants to use it in worship or post it on your website or FB page. You could record a Zoom Conversation between folks here and there and show it during or after worship. If your partner

has a FB account, they could livestream a portion of their Ukama Sunday worship and you could share it on your FB page. Lots of other ideas—be creative, and ask for guidance if you need it.

The Revised Common Lectionary passages for October 19th are a bit of a stretch for serving as a scriptural basis for celebrating Ukama. Here's some alternate options: 1 Thess 2:1-8 is a text featuring this wonderful line: "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." The basic text for Ukama is John 17:20-22, "that they all be one." During the 2024 visit there, some of us worked with Ephesians 2:13-22, with the idea that we are "no longer strangers." Whatever you do, if you let us know, we can incorporate it in future guidance for celebrating our relationship.

Rev. Frederick Thodhlana, a pastor of the UCCZ, has released an album in 2019 which is accessible on YouTube. The link below connects to that album.

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

Or, just key in "Rev Fredrick Thodhlana" in Youtube and a number of his songs will show up. Rev. Thondhlana is curating UCCZ's Facebook Group, which we commend to you. It's well worth sharing with everyone in your congregation.

We are hoping to make video presentation of the awesome Mt. Selinda School Chorus available. Stay tuned!

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.

On the side panel of the YouTube link above, you can find Rev. Thodhlana singing some of the most familiar hymns of the UCCZ. We have PDF's of some Shona hymns, including some you may find sung on the internet. I am happy to send the words and music at your request.

Some Ritual/Custom Suggestions:

Here's some ritual suggestions for the celebration.

Hand washing is an act of hospitality among members of the churches and a ritual that begins every church meal. Use a pitcher and bowl, pour water over the guest's hands, dry with a towel. Post-Covid, you could offer hand sanitizer to worshipers as they enter the church. If your worship is online, you could show a pitcher, towel, and basin, and perhaps have someone 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.

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 paper hymnal, but many have downloaded their hymnal to their mobile phone (way ahead of us!). 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.

This video “The Blessing Zimbabwe” came from a global project featuring similar blessings from other countries. It would make a wonderful benediction. Take 6 minutes right now to see and hear this blessing, and let it bless you.

<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.