



PRAYERFUL ACTION FOR FREE & FAIR ELECTIONS

3 May 2018

Ecumenical Election Covenant Launch Service

WE PRAY.WE VOTE

Between March and April 2018 the Zimbabwe Council of Churches invited leaders and laity from its member congregations to discuss their hopes, aspirations and expectations for the 2018 Harmonised Elections. What transpired were honest, objective and at times painful discussions around a subject that has done more to divide than unite the people of Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, Christians everywhere dared to hope and elected to contribute to the possibility of a blessed election period, one without political violence and beneficial to the progress of the nation. They see and some still need convincing that in the national dialogue and debate that is occasioned by this election lies an important opportunity for Zimbabwe to find better ways to pursue a more just, equitable and just future. This, as the Psalmist dares us to believe for Zimbabwe, 'You have turned my mourning into dancing for me; You

have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.' We are inspired by a pleasant precedent of the positive role of elections done in the right spirit from the book of Acts 6v3: 'Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men (and by inference women too) of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.' With this in mind we have not spared any effort to educate, mobilise and encourage Christians everywhere to be the salt and the light, making their voices heard, promoting peace and asking important questions. For so we pray. For so we vote.

The outcomes of these dialogues were captured in the form of Ecumenical Election Covenants to demonstrate not only the Christian community's unity of purpose but willingness to proactively and constructively influence the 2018 harmonised elections. The future of the nation depends on how we choose to carry out the 2018 harmonised elections, what we are willing to tolerate and what we shall be able to stand up against. Thus the Covenants from 33 different

locations universally condemn electoral violence, promote electoral reforms, desire issue based electoral politics based on substantive dialogue, prefer a more open media and most importantly emphasise the need for urgent attention to address poor service delivery, unemployment, water, roads, healthcare and housing.

We shall now set about conducting Ecumenical Launch Services in all the locations where Ecumenical Election Covenants have been developed. We intend during these services to prayerfully commit the elections to the Lord and ask Him to guide and protect all the men and women tasked to supervise and coordinate this important work. At the same time we shall pray for God to give us wisdom in selecting the men and women to be tasked to carry the nation forward as President, Parliamentarians, Senators and Councillors. Ecumenical Launch Services kick off in Bindura on the 19th at the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, whilst the National Launch Service is scheduled for 3 May at the Anglican Cathedral in Harare.

Bindura Ecumenical Election Covenant

Church Leaders from various congregations in Bindura converging under the Zimbabwe Council of Churches commit the 2018 Harmonised Elections in the hands of the Living God. We learn from the Holy Scriptures in Galatians 5 verse 22 – 23 that '*the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*' This is what we desire to see throughout this election period. Not violence. We want to see peace, unity and justice. With this in mind, we have outlined what we are praying for in the form of an Ecumenical Election Covenant.

To those seeking political office:

- We want morally upright leaders, honest and dignified people with a solid reputation of supporting our communities. '*When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn*' (Proverbs 29verse 2)
- We want leaders who value the national Constitution, respect our people's rights, treat us with respect, listen to us and represent us well at all times.
- We want exemplary leaders who are servants of the people of Zimbabwe, not 'Mashefu.'
- We prefer MPs who reside within the constituency in which they represent. We denounce shadow MPs who disappear after being elected to represent a constituency.
- We are tired of corruption. Corrupt people should be disqualified as unfit to hold public office. All politicians seeking public office should publicly declare their assets and account for funds that they receive in the name of the people.

To Political Parties:

- We expect you to treat all the women of Zimbabwe with dignity and respect. We view favourably, parties and candidates with plans and policies to economically empower and improve the condition of the majority of women and girls in Zimbabwe.
- We will not allow political parties to use the church as a campaigning platform. This implies that political parties or any member of a political party should not come to church wearing political regalia or force the church to endorse a specific political candidate, political party or political ideology.
- We call upon you by the mercies of God to make this a peaceful election. No political party should incite or instigate hate speech, violence, xenophobia, tribalism, regionalism or racism. Political parties should not sow the seeds of division. We want a

peaceful, united and progressive country. Just as the Psalmist assures us, '*a future awaits those who seek peace.*'

To the media:

- We call upon all media houses to give equal access to all aspiring candidates and parties.
- We ask our taxpayer funded Public Broadcasting stations to afford all political parties their right to access free media coverage of newsworthy events that are in the public interest.
- We would like to plead with the media to report responsibly. We learn from the scriptures in James 3 verse 5-6 '*...Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire.*' In this regard we ask you to serve the nation well by faithfully, objectively and courageously bearing witness to events good and bad as they occur in this volatile season.

To our security forces:

- We urge all the members of our security forces to remain disciplined and to protect the people of Zimbabwe from political violence.
- We call upon all security forces to remain non-partisan and apolitical, fully committed to upholding the Constitution of Zimbabwe.
- We prefer that our soldiers should remain in their barracks. The nation's security forces must not be used to further the interests of any political party.

To the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission:

- We pray for God to guide and enable you to carry out your duties with professionalism, integrity and exemplary commitment to duty.
- We ask you to avail the voters roll for inspection by all political parties before the elections.

To sitting Parliamentarians:

- We call upon you to speed up ongoing efforts to align the Electoral Law and all remaining laws to the Constitution.

To the Christian community:

- Let us commit ourselves to preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ necessary to heal our nation and foster a peaceful and tolerant environment under which peaceful elections can be conducted.
- We also invite fellow Christians and people of all faiths to join us in praying for peaceful elections.

To Zimbabweans at large:

- '*With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.*' (2 Thessalonians 1 verse 11)

Kadoma Ecumenical Election Covenant

The Christian Community and citizens of goodwill in Kadoma, led by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, guided by the word of God and inspired by the Holy Spirit firmly believe in the possibility of a peaceful, free and fair election in 2018. For with God all things are possible. We are emboldened by the word of God in our faith for these elections: 'if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17 verse 19-21)'' In light of this, we prayerfully bring forward this Ecumenical Election Covenant to publicly demonstrate our commitment to contribute towards a peaceful, free and fair election.

To Political Parties:

- We ask you to neither instigate nor perpetrate political violence. We encourage you to maintain a zero tolerance policy against politically motivated violence.
- We expect you to put in place concrete and verifiable plans, policies and disciplinary processes to address incidences of politically motivated violence.
- We also remind you that we do not want you to use our young people to fight your political battles. Please allow the youth to participate peacefully and in a dignified manner as the major stakeholder in the country's future and not as cheerleaders and perpetrators of violence.
- We urge you to facilitate gender parity in the selection of candidates, to value women as equal candidates to men and to remove the numerous boundaries to women's free and informed participation in internal democratic processes.

To aspiring candidates:

- We would like to see workable plans to facilitate improved access to quality, safe and drinkable water by all the residents of Kadoma rich or poor.
- We value the construction of public toilets at our communal dwelling places, informal places of work and markets as an effort towards reducing water-borne diseases and remove the indignity of hardworking men and women resorting to open defecation.
- We also value clear plans for the construction of new roads and the refurbishment of old existing roads; in particular, the much needed tributary road linking Kadoma with the Harare-Bulawayo highway.
- We would greatly appreciate the prioritisation in your manifestos and campaign pledges of the construction of tertiary institutions in Kadoma, either in the form of a University or a polytechnic so as to empower youth in this town with the tools to spearhead economy recovery in Kadoma.

- We further recommend the prioritisation, maintenance and construction of dilapidated social amenities and recreational facilities to keep the youths active and occupied so as to reduce idleness and the prevalence of drug abuse.
- We call for the review of outstanding electricity and water debts owed to the city council because in many instances these bills were levied for services not delivered by the town council. Ultimately, we demand the cancellation of these debts in instances where the town council never provided any service to warrant any payment from Kadoma residents.

To sifting Parliamentarians:

- We ask that you do more to align all laws with the constitution. Of importance to us is electoral reform, devolution of power and authority to local governments and the reform of repressive laws like POSA and AIPPA.

To Traditional leaders:

- We expect you to be non-partisan and to refuse to be used by political parties to campaign or mobilize people to support any political party at the expense of others.
- We strongly believe that our Traditional leaders should be exemplary, leading the way in facilitating national peace, national unity, as well as robust dialogue and engagement.
- We ask our Traditional Leaders not to discriminate against anyone based on gender, culture, tribe, language, political affiliation or creed when distributing public resources.

To our Security services:

- We plead with members of our security forces to remain professional and non-partisan in dispensing their duties.
- No polling station should be located within a ZNA, ZRP or ZPS camp; this implies that all members of ZNA, ZRP, and ZPS should vote outside their workplaces. In addition, members of the ZNA, ZRP and ZPS must vote freely, without any threats of being punished or dismissed from work if they don't vote for a particular party.

To fellow Christians:

- We invite you all to join the church in praying for peaceful elections.

'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever Amen'. Matthew 6 v 9-13

Midlands Ecumenical Election Covenant

WE, The Christian community of Gweru under the banner of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, stand united by a common desire to prayerfully contribute to the realisation of a free, fair, transparent, peaceful and credible election in Zimbabwe. We long to see a strong Christian presence for a united, peaceful, just and prosperous nation just as the scripture says, **'Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed'** (Proverbs 11verse11). By way of this Ecumenical Election Covenant we pledge to prayerfully do our utmost to support constructive initiatives to ensure a free and fair election. This is what our people deserve.

To all aspiring candidates:

- We cannot understand why in a country blessed with a rich bedrock of vast mineral resources, fertile land, abundant grasslands, expert labor and a Christian population the majority of our people are still poor.
- We need leaders who can liberate our people from poverty, joblessness, poor service delivery and an ever decreasing standard of living.
- We encourage you along with the Prophet Isaiah 'learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow (Isaiah 1 verse 17).

To Political Parties:

- We request you to consider in your Manifestos, sound economic programmes to give our youth jobs and the poor a fair share of the country's riches; concrete plans to improve service delivery; programmes and investments to economically empower women and girls; the empowerment of

local and provincial governance structures through devolution; as well as viable plans of action to urgently align our laws to the Constitution. These things matter a lot to us.

- We implore all political parties to shun vote buying antics. Let the people judge you by vision and ideas.
- We condemn all forms of violence -everything-including intimidation, issuing of threats, surveillance and asking for voter registration slips.
- We hope that all Political Parties have put in place sufficient mechanisms, safeguards and rules to ensure that primary elections will be conducted peacefully, in true democratic fashion and in keeping with the laws of the land.
- We condemn the politicization of public resources such as land, mineral resources and humanitarian assistance. Likewise the security forces, public media and traditional leaders must not be instrumentalised for political gain.
- We ask that rules and policies are put in a reformed electoral law to make it a legal requirement for all media houses to grant equal access to media coverage for all political parties.

To security forces:

- We expect to take pride in the honourable conduct befitting a disciplined security force that is non partisan and professional in executing its duties as mandated by the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

To the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission:

- We pray for God to guide you on this important task for the future of the nation. We wish you success in faithfully, independently and diligently fulfilling your Constitutional mandate.
- We call upon you to release the voters roll to political parties, to announce polling centers 6 weeks before elections and to implement robust civic education whilst allowing other to do so too.
- We call for the establishment of a special tribunal designed to address all electoral challenges, disgruntlements and offences.

Let us all honor the laws of Zimbabwe in our conduct and make a collective effort to ensure a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible election. On our part we will not rest in our prayers for these elections to go well. 'Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love' (2 John 1 verse 3).

Kwekwe Ecumenical Election Covenant

The Christian community of Kwekwe through the leadership of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, after having prayerfully considered the state of the nation commits to organise and participate in constructive efforts to realise free, fair, peaceful and credible elections in 2018. This is our duty as patriotic citizens. It is also a part and parcel of our calling as the salt and light of the earth. The word of God admonishes, **'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land'** (2 Chronicles 7 verse 14). We believe that the 2018 elections should promote rather than undermine the healing and restoration of our people, our economy and our politics after many years of crisis. Thus we present this Covenant as an outline of what we hope to see and what we are willing to be held accountable for.

To the people of Zimbabwe:

- We invite all Zimbabweans from all faiths to join us in praying for peace and tranquillity before, during and after the elections.
- We plead with those still pursuing conflicts big and small to 'beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.' The 2018 elections must not be used as an opportunity to settle scores.
- We remind the people of Zimbabwe that respectful dialogue and engagement in the spirit of national unity is the only way to solve our collective problems.

To aspiring candidates:

- We need solutions and not empty campaign promises.
- We want leaders who can find ways to improve service delivery in Kwekwe. In particular we call for the refurbishment of government hospitals and clinics. We also request the construction of new roads, the provision of safe drinking water and viable employment opportunities for our youth.
- We also want leaders who understand the plight of the majority of women and girls in Kwekwe who lack the opportunities, resources and tools to attain

a decent standard of living.

- We remind you of the biblical standard of leader that we deserve: 'blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.' (Titus 1 verse 7)

To political parties:

- We condemn the use of political violence as a tool to coerce or unduly influence the electorate to vote for a particular party or candidate. Violence of all forms should be condemned by all contesting political parties.
- We ask you not to force any church to forego its programs in place of a political rally or coerce any church member, particularly the clergy to market a political party or a political figure in the church.
- We request all political parties to respect the church as a non-partisan institution. Our role during the election will be to pray, to share information, to promote peace and to provide platforms for dialogue and engagement.

To the media:

- We prefer for all political parties to have equal access to media coverage so that we gain a full picture of our electoral choices.
- We encourage all media practitioners to be professional in conduct and non-partisan in action.
- We hope to see fair reports untainted by rumours, politicking, smear campaigns, spreading of propagandist material and hate speech intended to incite violence or tribal resentment.

To public officials:

- We condemn corruption of all forms. We wish to see a strict and robust approach in dealing with corruption based on an impartial application of Zimbabwean laws.

We therefore implore all Stakeholders with an interest in the upcoming 2018 elections to honour the dreams and aspirations of the Kwekwe residents as vividly espoused in this Ecumenical Election Covenant to ensure a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and credible election.



Manicaland Ecumenical Election Covenant

The Christian community in Manicaland, under the umbrella body of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, is praying for and expects to see a free, fair, transparent, peaceful and credible election process in 2018. Like the Prophet Isaiah we long **'to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour'** (Isaiah 61verse 2) in Zimbabwe.' But first we believe that the nation must come to terms with itself, its past and with the factors that have spawned poverty, violence, polarisation, oppression and injustice. The 2018 elections present an important opportunity for the nation to do so, if only, we unite and rally together to **'let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream'** (Amos 5 verse 24). Presently our hearts are troubled by the suffering of the majority of our people. Yet in our spirit we are simultaneously hopeful that there shall be times of refreshing and restoration. To this end, our role as highlighted in this Covenant is not only to pray but to advance the goal of a free, fair, transparent, peaceful and credible election through prayerful action.

To fellow Christians:

- We urge you to prayerfully participate in ongoing election processes. Your voices matter.

To fellow Citizens:

- We plead for tolerance. We long to see politics sustained by the free and constructive exchange of different views including those we differ with or are opposed to.
- We ask Politicians not to compel, hire or coerce our young people to participate in political violence or any actions that disrupt the social cohesion of our communities. We are prepared to actively de-campaign any politicians found promoting or facilitating violence, sexual abuse, sabotage and vandalism of public/private property.

To Political Parties:

- We are tired of political parties who come into our communities to sow the seeds of division, polarisation, intolerance and hate.
- We are also tired of patriarchal male dominance in our politics which essentially serves to marginalise the voices and interests of women and girls who are the majority of our potential. We therefore encourage gender parity in the allocation of political opportunities and resources within political parties.

- We long for a more people-centred politics that exalts unity over differences, policies over personalities, capabilities over connections and ideas over force.
- We remind all political parties along with the word of God: 'whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things' (Philippians 4 verse 8).
- We encourage political parties, as they craft their political manifestos and campaign promises, to prioritise: economic frameworks that stimulate growth whilst unlocking the potential of the informal sector and creating jobs for our young people; urgent actions to address the scourge of corruption in all our Institutions; practical steps to give women and girls fairer access to resources, opportunities and public services; laws and policies to give communities greater access and control of their own natural resources and robust reforms to help our local councils to improve social service delivery.
- We expect to see sufficient safeguards and measures to prevent and address inter and intra party violence. We also hope that all parties will bring to account any of their members found guilty of violent conduct.

To aspiring candidates:

- We prefer candidates with: clear ideas about how we can recover our stolen diamond revenue; how we can improve social service delivery; how we can create secure jobs for our young people; and how we can improve the declining standard of living for women and girls as well as other vulnerable groups such as the disabled, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses particularly cancer.

To the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission:

- We pray for you to be and to remain independent, non-partisan, professional and devoted to your constitutional mandate. May God give you strength and wisdom in carrying out this difficult task of managing our electoral processes.
- We expect you to: announce election results not more than 72 hours after elections have closed; ensure that all political parties are represented at all polling stations and to advertise all polling stations in advance so that people know in advance where they will be voting.

To the Media:

- We prefer that you report fairly, without fear, favour or prejudice.
- We request you to create inclusive platforms for non-censored public dialogue and debates so that the electorate can make informed decisions about their voting preferences.
- We ask our public broadcasters to grant equal access to public media to all political parties.

To the Judicial Courts of Law

- We ask for the establishment of Special Electoral Courts to deal with electoral issues expeditiously-issues such as punishing of political offenders who engage in violence and intimidating people.

'Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you' (1 Corinthians 13 verse 11).

Mash East Ecumenical Election Covenant

Christians and citizens of goodwill from Mashonaland East, having participated in community dialogue meetings influenced by the Holy Scriptures and committed to contribute towards a peaceful, free, fair and credible election in 2018.

Encouraged by **1 Timothy 1 verse 7 'for God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity but of power and self-discipline'** humbly and prayerfully submit the Mashonaland East Ecumenical Election Covenant. The Covenant outlines the hopes, expectations and commitments of the Christian community under ZCC during the 2018 Elections.

To all those responsible for service delivery in Mashonaland East:

- We remind all prospective candidates that service delivery is extremely poor in Mashonaland East, clean water is a scarce resource, there is no refuse collection, public roads are in tatters and tower-lights are no longer functional. We therefore call upon all those who aspire to become Councillors,

MPs, Senators or Presidents through the Mash East vote to devise practical and workable solutions to resolve these problems.

- We highlight the fact that more preferential support will be given to a prospective candidate who immediately engages practical and tangible efforts towards providing quality service delivery in the form of refuse collection efforts, making provision for clean water, servicing public roads to eradicate potholes and refurbishing tower lights through independent self-sustaining initiatives before the 2018 elections rather than a candidate who comes with cheap political rhetoric in the form of a campaigning promise.
- The cash crisis currently bedevilling the country should be resolved and Banks should give people their money, as and when they want it.
- We advocate for the creation of decent employment and the review of current government salaries so that they can be increased to surpass the current poverty datum line.
- We further demand the review of water payment system because the City council is charging residents exorbitant water bills for services not delivered.

To those in Public Office:

- All public officials, be it traditional leaders, councilors, elected parliamentarians, appointed officials and members of the executive must put the interests of Zimbabweans first.
- We call for fair, equitable and transparent distribution of public goods and resources, humanitarian assistance and economic opportunities.
- We ask God for Public leaders committed to unravelling years of poor governance and breakdown in rule of law by shunning corruption, incompetence, partisanship, patronage and patriarchy.
- We require those seeking Public Office to publicly denounce political violence and positively contribute towards a peaceful 2018 election.
- We ask Public Official to not use public goods, resources and opportunities to advance the electoral prospects of any political party during the Electoral campaign period.

To the Security sector:

- We expect our security forces to conduct themselves in a professional, non-partisan and constitutional manner without resort to the excessive use of force
- We respectfully ask for soldiers currently stationed at Rudhaka Stadium to return to their Barracks. (Their continued stay at the heart of this City is very intimidating to the residents of this town).
- We ask security forces to reassure the nation that they will accept the true outcome of the elections and that they will conduct themselves in accordance with the dictates of the Constitution of Zimbabwe before, during and after elections

To Political parties:

- We demand all political parties to desist from `hate` speech.
- We will not tolerate any politician or political party recruiting our youth to engage in violent activities. (We will actively de-campaign any party or individual found guilty of this harmful practice).
- We also make an appeal to all political parties and aspiring candidates to make this election a contestation of ideas and policies around what is best for the nation.
- We would appreciate a live televised debate of all presidential contesting parties as well as local debates for council and parliamentary candidates.
- We further submit that all political leaders should fulfill all of their campaigning promises. To this effect, the church will not offer any support to a leader who does not honor his or her election campaigning promise.

To policy makers:

- We call for more to be done to urgently align all our laws especially the electoral law to the Constitution
- We call for Independent national audits to help us get a clearer understanding of the true state of the national debt and resource base (especially land and mineral resources). These audits should be jointly supervised by the Auditor General's office and a Committee of Parliament.
- We would like to see a clear separation of powers between the executive, judiciary and legislature. In particular we ask for the independence of the judiciary to be guaranteed.

To fellow Christians:

- Let us commit ourselves to preaching the gospel of tolerance, peace, nation building and national unity at all times. We also urge all fellow Zimbabweans to

join the church in praying for peaceful elections.

1 Timothy 2 v 1-2 'first of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful, and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way'



Mash West Ecumenical Election Covenant

The Christian Community and citizens of goodwill in Chinhoyi united under the banner of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches met to prayerfully reflect and seek God's guidance on the 2018 elections. Previously, and on many past occasions, the church has been too quiet on the matter of elections. We regret that this quietness may have contributed to the prevalence of violence, division and polarisation. However, in 2018 we are determined as the Church to do more in contributing towards an election that honours God's will for peace that gives citizens a voice and leaders a clear mandate to carry the nation forward. The resulting Election Covenant represents what we hope for, what we are praying for and what we will stand up for in advancement of a peaceful, free and fair election.

To political parties

- In the interests of peace and social justice, we make a plea to all political parties and candidates to publicly condemn all forms of violence and make tangible commitments to preventing politically motivated conflicts.
- We denounce the politicization of public resources by political parties; under no circumstances should a political party abuse state funding and state resources for its political advantage.
- We ask the ruling political party not to use public institutions, resources and personnel for campaign purposes.
- In the same spirit, we ask opposition parties to be transparent and accountable about the sources of their financing for political campaign activities.
- We implore all political parties to respect the church as a non-partisan institution; this implies that no political party should use the church as a campaigning platform to gain political mileage.

To Parliamentarians

- We plead with you to maintain with urgency processes towards the alignment of all laws to the Constitution, in particular, the ongoing reforms of the electoral.
- We plead for the repeal of the POSA and AIPPA as they impinge of the freedoms of speech and association.

To Public Officials

- We condemn corruption of all forms in the realisation that corruption weakens all institutions of the state and prospects of the wellbeing of all Zimbabweans.
- We as the Christian Community pledge our full support to all Public Institutions such as the Police, Zimbabwe Anti-corruption Commission, the Auditor General's office as these restore citizens' trust in the institutions of the state.

To Traditional leaders:

- We ask our Traditional leaders to remain non-partisan as custodians of our culture, values and traditions. We urge traditional leaders not to be used by any political party to campaign or mobilize people to attend a political rally.
- Furthermore, we plead with our Traditional Leaders not to discriminate against anyone based on gender, culture, tribe, language, political affiliation or creed when distributing public resources and opportunities.
- We look forward to joining with you in facilitating peace and unity in our communities just as the word encourages us in the beatitudes that 'blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God' (Matthew 5:9)
- We also look forward to working with you in mediating conflicts when they arise and providing safe spaces and comfort to victims whenever the need arises.

To the media:

- We expect you not to publish, promote or publicise hate language. Here the holy scriptures in Ephesians 4verse 29 admonishes us 'let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.'
- We prefer balanced and constructive coverage.

All political parties should have equal access to media coverage. Public media must be professional in conduct and produce fair reports untainted by rumours, hearsay, politicking, smear campaigns, spreading of propagandist material and hate speech intended to incite violence or induce a misguided appreciation of the real events.

To security forces

- All security forces must remain non-partisan and remember that they do not serve a political party but that they serve the government and the people of Zimbabwe hence the need for them to protect citizens and maintain peace in the country.

To fellow Christians

- Let us commit ourselves to preaching the gospel of tolerance, peace, nation building and national unity at all times. We also urge all fellow Zimbabweans to join the church in praying for peaceful elections.

Masvingo Ecumenical Election Covenant

Christians from various churches in Masvingo imagine Zimbabwe's future as that of a God-fearing nation. 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29 verse 11). We therefore pray for Zimbabwe to become a nation of laws guided by the constitution; an equal society with not much difference between the rich and the poor; a safe home for our women and girls to thrive unhindered; a land of peace and unity where we solve problems without resort to violence; a prosperous country with enough food and work for all to live well and a blessed place in which we are free to worship and perform Christian service. As we embark on a democratic electoral process to choose the men and women whom the nation shall task to lead, we pray for peace to prevail and for wisdom to make the right choices. We realise that the world is watching, our people are expectant and others like the biblical Sanballat cannot help but wonder, **"What are those feeble Zimbabweans doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"** (Nehemiah 4 verse 2). The work of nation building and economic recovery requires us to have a peaceful, free and fair election.

To those seeking public office:

We ask that in your manifestos and policy frameworks you consider:

- Practical plans to facilitate the alignment of all our laws to the Constitution.
- Decisive action against corruption. This could include legal frameworks and policies to compel elected and appointed public officials to declare their assets before assuming office and account for funds that they receive or use during their term of office.
- Restoration of the honour and dignity of public office. We want to see practical safeguards to prevent Public Officials from using public office to serve personal, political party or any other interest outside of their constitutional mandates at taxpayers' expense.
- Fairer distribution of the nation's material riches, natural resources and economic opportunities to benefit not only the rich and powerful but all Zimbabweans who call this land home. We want to see laws and policies to compel all mining companies in this province to account for their mandatory contributions to Community Share Ownership Trusts. In addition we want to see measures to ensure that mining companies together with other corporations do more to develop the communities in which they operate and reverse the environmental damages caused by their operations.
- A more efficient Road Network and Infrastructural Development. We would like to see strategies to ensure the urgent dualisation of Masvingo Road, the refurbishment of Masvingo Airport and improvement of water and sanitation infrastructure.

To Political Parties:

- We believe that all aspiring political parties and candidates must be given room to campaign freely without repression. Likewise, political parties themselves must put in place measures to insure internal democratic practice and effective

sanctions against party members found guilty of perpetrating violence.

- We strongly favour Parties and candidates who make effective commitment towards realizing a balanced society that values women and advocates for girl child empowerment. We also support the call for an increased quota representation of women in parliament and gender parity in the allocation of cabinet posts.
- We would appreciate live television debates on national development and governance issues to help us compare the plans and policies of at least five of the leading aspiring presidential candidates.
- We call upon all political parties to remove the numerous barriers that prevent talented women and girls from assuming political office. We urge you to do your utmost to ensure gender parity in the allocation of campaign opportunities, resources and platforms.

To the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission:

- We pray for all ZEC Commissioners and employees to remain Independent, non-partisan, fair, objective and transparent.
- We ask for democratic and acceptable mechanisms to raise the threshold for political parties intending to contest in future.
- We ask for a detailed Election Calendar and access to electoral information such as location of polling centers, voters roll, voter registration data and voting timeslots.

To the Media:

- We ask all media houses to accord all political parties equal access to media coverage.
- We prefer a professional public media that reports fairly and objectively without fear, favor, prejudice or bias. The truth shall set us free.

To our Security Services:

- We encourage you to remain professional, disciplined and non partisan at all times.
- We expect that members of the Zimbabwe National Army will remain stationed in their barracks during election time.
- We do not expect to see unnecessary roadblocks, curfews or state of emergencies by the security sector during election period.

To our Traditional Leaders:

- We look up to you to safeguard and uphold our traditional values, cultural unity and strong sense of community.

To fellow Christians:

- We expect all church spaces to remain neutral and non-partisan in nature so that all Zimbabweans in need can utilize the church as a refuge and safe space to be heard.
- We encourage all Christians in Masvingo to support and contribute to church-led processes to observe and monitor electoral processes.

'This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,' (Isaiah 49 verse 8).

Zvishavane Ecumenical Election Covenant

The Zvishavane, Ngezi and Runde Ministers Fraternal, Mubatanidzwa wemadzimai, Men's Forum and Youth Forum stand united in prayer and prayerful action for a peaceful, free and fair election in 2018. We expect no less. We believe God for the best. We long to see the restoration of Zimbabwe to God's shining glory. In electoral seasons past, our people have had to endure violence, political turmoil and unrest. 'Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved' (Psalms 80 verse 3). In this current season, many of our people lack the basic necessities for a dignified life. Many do not have enough water to drink or food to eat. Others are in bondage to debts whilst trying to survive. 'Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.' We tell our children of the better days that we have experienced before in the country of our birth but they no longer believe us. Many are losing hope in the promise of a prosperous future in Zimbabwe. The available jobs are too few for our learned children. They turn to us for help yet we are also in need of help. 'Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved'. Our living conditions keep getting worse.

Yet some amongst our leaders are more interested in taking from us through corruption than in meeting our needs. Our public institutions have lost their dignity and respect. 'Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved'. Many of our people have adopted the methods of heartless competition for scarce resources, disunity and political division just to survive. Some have found it easier to cut off the bonds that tied us together as a people. The things we used to hold dear no longer inspire us to dream of a better future for all. 'Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved'.

To aspiring candidates:

- 'Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock' (1 Peter 5 verse 2-3).
- We will consider favourably candidates with clear plans to facilitate economic recovery and job creation in Zvishavane. In particular we welcome candidates with plans to:
 - facilitate the re-opening and resuscitation Shabanie Mine;
 - develop roads in Zvishavane local town;
 - reform the operations of 'makorokoza' so that we all benefit whilst at the same time protecting the environment;
 - develop food processing industries so that we don't rely on other towns for the food we eat.
 - attract accessible funding for Zvishavane residents to grow their businesses.

To Public Officials:

- We ask for fairness and honesty in the distribution of public goods and services during the course of these elections. No Zimbabwean should be denied any public benefit for political reasons. In particular Government scholarships must be awarded to those desperately in need, priority being given to orphans and children of disadvantaged and disabled parents.
- We ask for more to be done to align all our laws to the Constitution so that we can enjoy the full benefits of what the Constitution provides.
- We encourage officials in our public broadcasting services to give equal coverage to all political parties so that we can make an informed assessment of what each contesting party has to offer for the public good.

To political parties:

- We ask you to treat women equally and to treat them fairly. We want to see you doing more to enable women to assume political office so that we can enjoy the benefits of a gender balanced leadership.
- We ask that you do not use public offices, resources and services for the sole benefit of your party members to the exclusion of Zimbabweans in general.
- We request you not to field candidates who do not ordinarily reside in Zvishavane. We will not be pleased with candidates who contest in Zvishavane only to relocate to other towns soon after receiving the mandate to occupy a parliamentary seat in any of the Zvishavane constituency.
- We ask that you hold to account leaders and members who instigate or propagate violence for and on behalf of the Party or aspiring candidate.
- We also emphasise that all political parties should desist from making foul slogans, hateful speech and violent mantras that denigrate women, other political parties or political figures.

To our security forces:

- We expect you to accept the outcome of the elections.
- We ask you to remain in your barracks as we conduct this civilian process of voting in peace.

To fellow Christians:

- We urge all churches to preach peace and the gospel of tolerance and to pray without ceasing for peaceful elections in our country.
- We expect that the Church will remain neutral at all times. Church premises must not be used as campaigning platforms but should remain as a place of preaching the Gospel of Christ.

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit' (Romans 15verse 13).