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PHAKAMISA
A Ministry of
Pinetown Methodist Church



PHAKAMISA UK
UK Registered Charity
Commission No. 1095757
www.phakamisa.org

"PHAKAMISA" is pronounced "PA-GA-MEE-SA" and means "TO LIFT UP, TO MAKE GROW"

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December 2025

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write this we are in that period when we are looking back and remembering with gratitude the sacrifices of the past but then beginning to look forward with hopeful anticipation to Advent, Christmas and another New Year.

We look back just a few weeks to Zethu's visit to the UK. She had a busy programme which ran smoothly, although, because of a mix up between leaving and arrival dates the first 24 hours were fairly manic and exhausting for Zethu.

Zethu's visit saw her visit new places in the Notts and Derby District, an opportunity to share at the new Northwest District Synod, and a visit to a Church in the Bristol District. Our hope and prayer is that we have reawakened interest in some areas and inspired others to support Phakamisa for the first time.

One of the features of her visit was a short homemade video put together by a young man who told his story. How back in 2004 as a toddler he attended a Phakamisa wandering school. How that experience set him up for life, how the teacher there inspired him to have faith in himself. Next year he said that he would be going to university, to study so that he could go on to inspire more young people as he had been inspired at Phakamisa.

I wonder how many look back at their early beginnings in Phakamisa wandering schools and are thankful for the foundations that were laid in the humblest of surroundings by lovely people prepared and trained through the Phakamisa Edu care programmes. Or indeed how many look back and are thankful for the step up that learning to cook or sew or to grow vegetables gave them, transforming their lives.

It is good to look back at our successes and to thank God for his faithfulness and the way he has blessed us. I know that over the past years many of you have given sacrificially to Phakamisa, you will have prayed over the years for the project through good times and bad. Words cannot express our gratitude for your contributions over the past years and how they have helped Phakamisa to grow and develop to where it is today.

Looking forward Phakamisa continues to develop and grow its programmes. Reports suggest that graduates from their Educare classes are sought after in the local area. The need for Wandering Schools is as strong as ever with the added need to feed many of the children who attend them.

The progress that is being made in Phakamisa is of course set against the same kind of challenges that we face here in the UK. Cost of living rises, the effects of Climate Change measured by extreme weather conditions damaging the sometimes fragile physical structure of 'wandering schools', and I guess the uncertainties of the world today.

There is the growing gap in income and expenditure in Phakamisa. A recent message from Zethu indicated a shortfall of R24000 per month which is approximately £2000. Clearly, they will not be able to sustain those kinds of losses for long.

As a UK Trust we have committed to a monthly transfer of £5000, made possible by income from our partners, donations and special fund-raising events etc. but this is getting increasingly difficult and we may struggle to meet this commitment in 2026.

And so, Phakamisa looking back over the months and the years can see progress in many areas and lives transformed and uplifted. Looking forward there is much work yet to do, excitement at the possibilities of more opportunities to 'lift up' and influence their communities. As they/we face the future there are challenges too – how do we plug the gaps in finance in a world where there seems to be more and more demands on our resources?

As Christians we are now looking forward to Christmas, a time when we celebrate the greatest miracle of all when a babe was born, to be called 'Immanuel' meaning 'God with us. (Matt.1:23) A time when messages of hope, joy and peace abound. An event which changed and shaped history for our whole world, a time when the good folk in Phakamisa will be celebrating, as we will, the birth of Jesus in humble surroundings two thousand years ago. We look forward too, to a time when Christ will come again to banish pain, suffering and death forever.

As we reflect on both the achievements and the ongoing needs, it is clear that the story of Phakamisa is one of resilience and hope. The commitment of staff and supporters—both here and in Pinetown—remains at the heart of everything accomplished. Each contribution, whether through time, prayer, or financial support, continues to play a vital role in sustaining and expanding the reach of this important work.

Thank you for your contributions and your support to Phakamisa.

I hope and pray that Christmas for you will be a season of peace and joy.

God Bless

Rev Dennis Smith (On behalf of the UK Trust)