

Help Zimbabweans in Need



Children gather at the preschool at Central Methodist Mission. They include refugees whose families have fled Zimbabwe and are being served by the church.
Faye Richardson/UMNS

Central Methodist Church

The Central Methodist Church of Johannesburg has become the place of refuge for many homeless Zimbabweans.

This historic congregation opens its space every night for all who can find a place to lie down. It also offers a small legal aid clinic, a free health clinic twice a week, courses in basic literacy, and child care—mostly provided by volunteers. The hungry at the church door form what the New York Times called an ‘endless queue.’

Welcoming Newcomers

The South African government does not welcome the newcomers but Methodist Bishop Paul Verryn of Johannesburg has an open door. As many as 700 people a night make their way to Central Church. It is a ministry not without critics, especially among those

Thousands are fleeing Zimbabwe to escape economic deprivation and political uncertainty. They often say they are escaping “hunger.” Many of these unofficial refugees find their way to Johannesburg, where jobs and shelter, food and water are in short supply.

who remember when the large Central Church was a bastion of privilege.

Many of the displaced people are highly professional and help others as they can. Bishop Verryn told a reporter from the Australian Broadcasting Company last June:

I have a doctor sitting outside, we have nursing sisters, I have plumbers, carpenters, fitters and turners, as I say, schoolteachers, accountants, auditors. I had a woman who came in and saw me today with three small children and she was quite bowed into herself, you know, she said to me, "I can't stand watching these children starve for another day", but she has got nothing. She has no blankets, she has no food, she hasn't got a future, and she has got three small children.

How You Can Help

You can help Central United Methodist Church of Johannesburg, South Africa, to provide shelter and food to some of the poorest women, men and children on earth: displaced people from Zimbabwe.

Give to **UMCOR Advance #199456, Zimbabwe Emergency**. Write the Advance # and name on the memo line of your check.

By Offering

For local church and Annual Conference credit, put your gift in the offering plate on Sunday.

By Check

Make your check to **UMCOR** and mail to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087

By Credit Card

Call toll-free (800) 554-8583



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The United Methodist Committee on Relief delivers hope and enhances human dignity through food, shelter, health and peace projects.

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