



**Revised Plan for Union of the
Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America**
(approved by both General Assemblies on June 2016)

“There is one, holy, universal, apostolic church. She is the body of Christ, who is her Head and Lord” (*Confession of Faith* 5.01). “The church is one because her head and Lord is one, Jesus Christ. Her oneness under her Lord is manifested in the one ministry of word and sacrament, not in any uniformity of covenantal expression, organization, or system of doctrine” (5.02). “The church, as the covenant community of believers who are redeemed, includes all people in all ages, past, present, and future, who respond in faith to God’s covenant of grace, and all who are unable to respond, for reasons known to God, but who are saved by his grace” (5.06). It is on this belief that the Unification Task Force recommends the union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (CPCA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (CPC). We are one in Christ by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit! We believe that becoming one will strengthen our witness as Christian believers in the world, and that together we will be able to accomplish more for the glory of God. United together in Christ by faith, we are united to one another in love. In this communion we share the grace of Christ with one another, bear one another’s burdens, and reach out to all other persons (*Confession of Faith* 5.10).

1.00 Mission Statement for the New Church

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church United affirms the great commission of Christ: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you until the end of the age”(Matthew 28:19-20). We celebrate our oneness in faith. As disciples, we seek through worship, global witness, and service to be the hands and feet of Christ and to live out the love of Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

2.0 The Confession of Faith and Government

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church United will use the *Confession of Faith and Government* of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, approved by both General Assemblies of the former denominations in 1984 as its system of faith and government.

NOTE: It should be noted that in the Constitution (4.6, 5.6p) the CPC allows for a session to request permission from Presbytery for a designated elder to be trained and granted permission to serve communion for a one year period of time. This is an exception, NOT A RULE for general practice, for those presbyteries that have difficulty supplying each church with an ordained minister. The responsibility lies with presbytery for proper training and oversight of the designated elder. Again, is this an EXCEPTION. No presbytery is required to apply this exception.

2.1 The Cumberland Presbyterian Church United will use the *Catechism for Cumberland Presbyterians* (2008) for instruction in the faith and will include it in an updated edition of the *Confession of Faith and Government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United*.

2.2 The *CP Digest* (CPC) and Summaries of Actions (for both denominations) will continue to serve as resource tools. A new *Digest* will begin with the formation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United.

3.0 The Presbyteries and Synods

3.1 In an effort to make union something more than just an idea on paper, and to engage the grassroots in creating the new church, we recommend a restructure of the synod boundaries to create eight synods for the new church, with the following presbyteries in each –

Synod A*	Synod B*	Synod C	Synod D
Brazos River	Angelina	Covenant	Cleveland, Ohio
Del Christo	Arkansas	Missouri	Cumberland
Red River	Choctaw	New Hopewell	North Central
Hong Kong	East Texas	Purchase	Ohio Valley
Japan	Trinity	West Tennessee	
	Andes		
	Cauca Valley		
Synod E	Synod F	Synod G	Synod H
Columbia	East Tennessee	Florence	Birmingham
Elk River	Hiawasse	Hope	Grace
Murfreesboro	Tennessee-Georgia	Huntsville	South Alabama
Nashville	East Coast Korean	Robert Donnell	Tuscaloosa
		Tennessee Valley	

For relationship building during the first six years, all synods will be encouraged to hold an annual general meeting (*Constitution* 8.2) as opposed to a delegated meeting. Synods may petition General Assembly at any point for a change in boundaries.

* *NOTE: There are plans for organizing a new presbytery in Central and/or South America in the near future, as well as dreams for organizing a third presbytery in Asia. As soon as it is practical to do so, whether before or after union, two additional synods should be constituted. Synod I would include Andes, Cauca Valley, and any other presbyteries organized in Latin America. Synod J would include Hong Kong, Japan, and any other presbyteries organized in Asia.*

3.2 Presbyteries will remain as they are constituted at the time of union. During the first six years of the new church’s life, synods will be encouraged to study the most beneficial presbyterial boundaries within their jurisdiction to fulfill of the mission of the church. Presbyteries may petition their synod at any time for a change in boundaries.

4.0 Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegates to the General Assembly

4.1 Commissioners to the General Assembly

Each Presbytery will be entitled to send 2 minister commissioners and 2 elder commissioners to the General Assembly.

NOTE: If presbytery boundaries remain as currently constituted at the time of unification, this will allow for a total possible membership in the General Assembly of 152 commissioners. Of these potential commissioners, 60 would come from former presbyteries of the CPCA, and 92 would come from the former CPC.

4.2 Youth Advisory Delegates

Each presbytery will be entitled to send up to two Youth Advisory delegates to the General Assembly.

5.0 Moderator and Vice Moderator of General Assembly

5.1 The moderator/vice moderator will be elected each year during the first six years with the two offices alternating between persons from the two former denominations.

5.2 The moderator and vice moderator of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United will reflect its diverse nature, to include international representatives. The church expects the moderator and vice moderator to travel within the denomination, sharing and gathering information among its local churches. Expenses and particular duties will be detailed in the Standing Rules of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United.

6.0 Stated Clerk and Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

6.1 The new church shall employ a Stated Clerk and an Associate Stated Clerk. Both positions will be full-time jobs. During the first six years of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United, the Stated Clerk will serve six years and the Associate Stated Clerk will serve four years, after which each would be elected for a four-year period. One position will be filled by a former CPCA and the other position filled by a former CPC during their first terms. The subsequent election of each position will allow for continuity during transitions. Particular duties and responsibilities of the Stated Clerk and Associate Stated Clerk will be detailed in the Standing Rules of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United.

7.0 Boards and Agencies of the General Assembly

7.1 Each church has programs in various stages of planning and implementation that are the result of commitment to ministry through the church. Insofar as possible, these plans and programs will be continued without interruption for a period of three years. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church has covenantal relationships with the Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home in Denton, Texas and Bethel University in McKenzie, Tennessee. These covenantal relationships will remain in effect as they exist at the time of Unification, to be renewed every four years. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church United will continue ecumenical partnerships, such as with the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

7.2 Institutional Boards

The General Assembly shall have the following institutional boards: Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary to include the Program of Alternate Studies and School of Continuing Education Committee, and Trustees of the Historical Foundation. Representation on each Board of Trustees will remain as they are constituted at the time of union.

7.3 Administrative Boards

The General Assembly shall have the following administrative Boards: The Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits and The Board of Directors of the General Assembly Corporation. During the transition period, each of these boards will have equal number of members from each of the former denominations.

7.4 Commission

The General Assembly shall have the following commission: Chaplains and Military Personnel. Representation on the commission will be merged as they are constituted at the time of union until natural rotation occurs.

7.5 Standing Committees

The General Assembly shall have the following standing committees: Theology and Social Concerns, Judiciary, Our United Outreach, Nominating, and Multi-Cultural Ministry.

Committee representation on the Theology and Social Concerns Committee will remain as constituted at the time of union until natural rotations occurs.

Judiciary and Nominating committees in both denominations will each be merged at the time of union.

Committee representation for Our United Outreach will be expanded to include two elected representatives from each new synod (one voting representative from each of the former denominations until natural rotation occurs).

The Committee on Multi-Cultural Ministry is a new committee that will reflect the diversity of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United. This committee will be comprised of eight (8) elected persons that will reflect the celebrative understanding of humanity in the areas of culture, language, heritage, and experience in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United. Believing that all have been created in God's image, this committee works to answer the question of our sameness in God's image lived out in diverse ways.

7.6 The Cumberland Presbyterian Church United will have a Mission Programming Agency to provide coordination and oversight for those ministries formally planned and implemented by the two former denominations. After the three-year period, the new programming and denominational structure will consist of the following ministries and entities –

Christian Education & Nurture (Youth Convention & National Sunday School Convention)

Missions (Evangelism, Missionary Auxiliary, Women's Ministry)

Clergy Care & Development

Communications (Cumberland Flag, Cumberland Presbyterian Magazine, Missionary Messenger, website)

Composition of each ministry entity will include equal number of persons from each of the former denominations in the new church at the time of union. Composition of the new Mission Programming Agency will include one staff person and one elected member from each ministry entity, along with one elected member representing each of the synods. The elected members will be equally representative of the two former denominations for the first six years. A Ministry Coordinator would provide executive leadership for the Mission Programming Agency.

8. Denominational Staff & Personnel

Currently, the CPCA employs two full time staff members; the CPC employs twenty-five staff members.

8.1 The new organizational structure will discontinue the positions of Administrative Director (CPCA) and the Director of Ministries (CPC) and will create the positions of Associate Stated Clerk and Ministry Coordinator. The duties and parameters of each position and corresponding selection processes will be determined during the Implementation Phase and detailed in the Standing Rules.

8.2 Staffing for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United will reflect the diversity of the new church. As new staff positions become available, equal opportunity employment practices will prevail.

8.3 Denominational Offices –During the first six years, steps are to be taken to assure that regional sites be located in a minimum of three and a maximum of five locations. Thus, neither the Center in Huntsville nor the Center in Memphis will be designated as “the denominational center.” By placing regional sites in a variety of locations this will assure that all areas of the church will be served equally. These regional sites can make use of offices in existing churches, or in homes of regional staff persons. Possible regional locations could be Memphis, Huntsville, Louisville, Texas, South America, Asia, etc.

8.4 Global Staff

There will be endorsed missionaries and partner missionaries in the new church. The new church will continue to support current and future missionaries and global work. Current missionaries include – CP Missionaries: Boyce and Beth Wallace (Colombia, South America), Patrick and Jessica Wilkerson (Colombia, South America), Carlos and Luz Dary Rivera (Mexico), Anay Ortega (Guatemala), Fhanor and Socorro Pejendino (Guatemala), Jacob and Lindsey Sims (Brazil), Daniel and Kay Jang (Philippines), John and Joy Park (Philippines), DSL (Cambodia-Laos). CP Missionaries working with non-denominational missions: Kenneth and Delight Hopson (Uganda),TTG (Kyrgyzstan). Global Work, there are CP Churches in: Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Hong Kong, Japan, Laos, Mexico, Philippines, South Korea, and the USA.

9.0 Stewardship and Finance

9.1 Legal control of assets of both churches will be transferred to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United through appropriate legal transaction. The intent of all designated gifts and endowments will be honored.

9.2 The Cumberland Presbyterian Church United will develop an approach to the financing of the programs of the church that reflects the stewardship understanding of the new constituency. Such a unitary approach will be developed as soon as possible after formation and no later than the end of the first six years.

10.00 Recognition of Ordination

All ordinations, both clergy and lay (elders and deacons), of both denominations will be recognized by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United. All future ordinations will be governed by the conditions specified in the Constitution. Persons who are recognized by their respective presbyteries as candidates and licentiates at the time the new church is formed will fulfill the requirements as specified by presbytery at the time they became probationers.

11.00 The Name of the New Denomination

The name of the denomination shall be the Cumberland Presbyterian Church United.

12.00 The Logo of the New Church

A new logo will be fashioned by the new church.