



SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
190th General Assembly
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk

The following summary is NOT the authoritative document for guiding the Church's action. Only the General Assembly Minutes can serve that purpose.

ORGANIZATION

1. Elected the Reverend Duawn Mearns, Red River Presbytery, as the Moderator. Elected the Reverend Alan Meinzer, Arkansas Presbytery, as the Vice Moderator.
2. Elected thirty-seven people to serve on denominational boards and entities.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

3. The opening worship/communion service was held on Monday evening. Retiring Moderator (CPC) Reverend Shelia O'Mara, Presbytery del Cristo, delivered a sermon entitled, "Rise Up" based on Isaiah 40:31. The Reverends Shelia O'Mara and Neal Wilkinson (GA Worship Director, Missouri Presbytery) served as co-celebrants of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. A brief service of installation of the newly elected moderator was part of the worship service.
4. Youth Advisory Delegate, Ms. Avery Stence, Youth Advisory Delegate from North Central Presbytery, brought the devotional on Thursday morning.

5. Reverend Neal Wilkinson, worship director for General Assembly, delivered the closing homily based on John 14:15-31.

OUR UNITED OUTREACH

6. Approved a goal of \$2,500,000 for Our United Outreach (OUO) for 2022.
7. Authorized the GA Corporate Board to adjust the allocation previously designated for Unification, and apply to any future funding needs related to unification efforts (e.g. proposed new Joint Multi-Culture Committee).
8. Authorized the GA Corporate Board to re-allocate any remaining balance of UTF funds to cover any outstanding GA expenses due to the impact of COVID-19 (e.g., cancellation of CPCA GA concurrent meeting, lower attendance/room reservations, reduced meeting and meal functions demand.)

MINISTRY COUNCIL

9. Adopted the *Affirmation of Faith and Commitment to Witness for Cumberland Presbyterians* (www.cumberland.org) and encouraged all presbyteries to incorporate it in their 2021 fall presbytery meeting worship service or devotion and encourage all congregations to include it into their worship service on Worldwide Communion Sunday, Oct. 3, 2021.
10. Encouraged each presbytery to form a Critical Situation Response Team (CSRT) to include strategies, contingency plans and persons tasked with coordinating risk assessment, management, and communications related to crises that may occur within the bounds of their presbytery.
11. Instructed the Ministry Council to distribute the example of a CSRT to the stated clerks of each presbytery and guide implementation of #10 (see above.)

**COMMISSION ON MILITARY
CHAPLAINS AND PERSONNEL**

12. Changed the GA bylaws Articles 10.01.03 and 10.08 to rename the Commission on Military Chaplains and Personnel to *Commission on Federal Chaplains*.
13. Instructed presbyteries in the United States to encourage each congregation to receive an offering on the last Sunday of May, or another

special day, to support our ministry through Presbyterian Council for Federal Chaplains.

14. Requested all CPC and CPCA presbyteries to encourage congregations and their members to determine and designate special days through the year to hold up the chaplains and their families in the service to which they have been endorsed.

MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

15. Encouraged Cumberland Presbyterians to pray that God will continue to call men and women to the office of ministry, and that they be well prepared through our educational institutions to lead growing and vibrant congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ to the world.

16. Called on Cumberland Presbyterians to offer a prayer of thanksgiving that the accreditation of Memphis Theological Seminary (MTS) has been reaffirmed by both of its accrediting bodies with no stipulations.

17. Approved the MTS Trustees' desire to sell some or all of the MTS rental properties and/or vacant lots in an effort to reduce or eliminate MTS's \$2.3 million property debt, and the seminary's dependence upon their \$1 million line of credit loan for operational purposes.

MTS EVALUATION COMMITTEE

18. Requested that MTS, as a component of its short and long-term strategic plan, develop procedures to address the communication and relationship needs identified in the MTS Evaluation Committee Report to GA.

19. That Presbyteries affirm the importance of section 6.34 of the Constitution, which states: *"No licentiate shall be ordained who has not completed a degree in a graduate school of theology approved by the presbytery. Exceptions may be made only of persons possessing suitable gifts and abilities for a fruitful ministry, but who, because of reasons considered valid in the judgment of the presbytery, cannot be expected to complete the regular course of study in a graduate school of theology. In such cases a licentiate shall not be ordained until he or she has satisfactorily completed under the direction of the presbytery a two-year program of alternate studies approved by the General Assembly,"*

20. Dissolved the MTS Evaluation Committee.

BETHEL UNIVERSITY

21. Urged presbyteries worldwide to support Bethel University in prayers, financial support and in recommending students.

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S HOME

22. Commended the Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home and staff for their continued work in the care, support and transformation of lives of children and families in all walks of life. Their work to enrich the lives of children and families in crisis situations deserves our continued prayer and financial support.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

23. Recognized the unending task of archiving our vital church history and expressed appreciation of the dedication and passion Mrs. Susan Knight Gore and Ms. Ashley Lindsey have for this ministry.

24. Requested that the Historical Foundation obtain budgetary estimates for the conversion of fragile and deteriorating analogue media to digital formats in order that it might be preserved. This estimate is to be presented to the 191st General Assembly.

JUDICIARY

25. Approved sending the following proposed changes to the Constitution to the presbyteries for ratification:

- That Constitution 3.071 be amended to read:
"The following persons shall be seated by a judicatory as advisory member with full privilege of speaking to any issue before the judicatory, but no vote:

- a. In sessions, assistant and associate pastors approved and installed by the presbytery.*

- b. In middle judicatories, elected officers of the judicatory, (for example, stated clerk, engrossing clerk, and treasurer), and other official representatives from the judicatory's standing committees or boards.*

- That Constitution 3.072 be amended to read:
"The following persons may, with the approval of the judicatory, be seated as advisory members of the judicatory upon their introduction by the moderator:

- a. *In middle judicatories, visiting ordained Cumberland Presbyterian ministers and elders.*
- b. *Elected youth advisory delegates.*
- c. *Representatives from higher judicatories.*
- d. *Visiting ministers or leaders from other denominations with which the judicatory is in partnership.*
- e. *Any other person whose presence would, in the judgment of the judicatory, serve the mission and ministry of the judicatory.”*

26. Requested that the Permanent Judiciary Committee meet with the stated clerk of the Synod of the Midwest to work on reconciling a miscommunication in reviewing the minutes submitted by Synod of the Midwest.

UNIFICATION TASK FORCE

27. Commended the task force for their hard work and many hours spent these last years on unification with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (CPCA.)

28. Encouraged presbyteries and synods to seek out opportunities for developing union churches and presbyteries with the CPCA.

29. Recommended the formation of a new Joint Committee on Multi-cultural Ministries to be composed of four members of each denomination, composition to include adults of all age groups, especially younger adults to express our unity more fully in the future (contingent upon approval by the CPCA General Assembly).

30. Approved granting \$12,000 from the OOU allocation for the formation of the new Joint Committee on Multi-cultural Ministries for its first year of work.

31. Requested that the GA offices of the CPC and CPCA study the desirability and feasibility of periodic concurrent GA meetings of the two denominations, so that we can work and worship together as Cumberland Presbyterians and that a joint report be made to both Assemblies (if adopted by the CPCA.)

32. Dissolved the Unification Task Force. The following is the tally of presbytery votes on the *Plan of Union*:

CPC - 20 presbyteries voted in favor of the plan, 3 did not favor the plan, and 1 did not report.

CPCA - 3 presbyteries voted in favor of the plan, 10 did not favor the plan, and 1 did not report.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

33. Commended Rev. Vernon Sansom for his dedicated service as Engrossing Clerk, from 2012-2021.

34. Referred to the Office of the General Assembly the following items for study and feasibility:

- Every other year meetings of the General Assembly (GA)
- Two year terms for the offices of Moderator and Vice-Moderator
- Changing the election/installation of Moderator to a later date/time in the GA meeting schedule.
- Providing print material and verbal translations in the native languages for GA Commissioners.

35. Approved the Church Calendar dates for 2021-2022.

THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

36. Affirmed what the Confession Of Faith states on human sexuality, with specific regard to section 1.11 which states: *“Among all forms of life, only human beings are created in God’s own image. In the sight of God, male and female are created equal and complementary. To reflect the divine image is to worship, love and serve God.”*

37. Affirmed the following Statement on Opposition to Oppression based on Sexual Identity and referred to the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concern for development of resources: *“We affirm the Confession of Faith and its definition of human sexuality. Echoing the Holy Scripture, the Confession declares that humans are created in the image of God, so we believe that there is no place in any form in our church or in our world for hate, denigration, unkind confrontation, and/or physical violence perpetrated on anyone, or oppression of any person based on their gender or sexual expression.”*

MISCELLANEOUS

38. Commended all Denominational Center staff (General Assembly Office; Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits; Historical Foundation; and the Ministry Council) be recognized and commended for the

faithful ministry they carried on during the COVID-19 pandemic.

39. Tasked the Ministry Council, General Assembly Office, Board of Stewardship, and the Historical Foundation (and other relevant entities) to develop a strategic plan that includes a mission statement, vision statement, guiding principles and goals for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and report back to the 192nd General Assembly. This team is to be convened by the Stated Clerk in the fall of 2021.

40. A Joint Banquet and Program, sponsored by the Children's Home, Bethel University and Memphis Theological Seminary was held on Wednesday evening. Ms. Courtney Banatoski, Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Walter Butler, Bethel University President, Reverend Dr. Jody Memphis Theological Seminary President brought greetings, video presentations on their respective institutions, and their continuing appreciation for the prayers and mission support given by Cumberland Presbyterians. Reverend Dr. Michael Qualls, Director of the Program of Alternate Studies spoke briefly about the origins of the Program of Alternate Studies in 1983 and how it continues to meet the needs of individuals engaged in congregational ministry.

41. The Cumberland Presbyterian Women's Convention Luncheon was held on Thursday. Ms. Sierra Keenan was awarded the 2020-2021 Bethel University Scholarship. During the program, Mrs. Betty Jacob was presented with a Silver Patron pin from the Cumberland Presbyterian Women's Convention and Missions Ministry Team plaque, recognizing her work as Director of Indian Ministries to Choctaw Presbytery, 1988-2020. Reverend Patrick and Mrs. Jessica Wilkerson, Missionaries to Colombia, South America made a presentation on their work and expressed appreciation for prayers and support through the Scott-Wallace Missionary Fund. Ms. Judy-Miller-McGee, 2021-2022 President, gave the benediction.

42. Adopted a *Resolution of Thanks* presented by Rev. Tera Sisco, Red River Presbytery.

43. Affirmed the invitation from Presbytery del Cristo to host the 191st General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

NEXT MEETING

44. The General Assembly adjourned to meet in Albuquerque, New Mexico on June 19-24, 2022.

Copies of the General Assembly Minutes when completed will be made available in the following formats:

- *Online:* www.cumberland.org/gao
- *A limited supply of printed copies will be made available through the Cumberland Presbyterian Resource Center (901-276-4581)*
- *Copies of the Minutes on CD format will also be available from the General Assembly Office. Contact Elizabeth Vaughn at: 901-276-4572 or eav@cumberland.org*



*"...but they who wait upon the Lord shall renew
Their strength, they shall mount up with wings like
Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall
Walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:31*