



2026 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

195th General Assembly Cumberland Presbyterian Church

Meeting June 15-19, 2026

Embassy Suites • Rogers, Arkansas

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 Daniel Barkley, Grace Presbytery, as the Moderator. Elected the Reverend Kim Moore, Nashville Presbytery, as the Vice Moderator.

2. Elected forty-five 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 Jhony Montañó, Cauca Valley Presbytery, delivered a sermon based GA theme and scripture text: Our Stories of Faith, based on Psalm 78:4. The Reverends Jhony Montañó and Kathy Lofton (GA Worship Director, Red River Presbytery) served as co-celebrants of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. A brief service of installation for the newly elected moderator and vice-moderator was part of the worship service.

4. A Wednesday evening worship service, with the theme: Retelling the Old, Old, Story, was sponsored by the Pastoral Development Ministry Team, Discipleship Ministries Team and the Louisa Woosley Preaching Initiative.

5. Youth Advisory Delegate, Ms. Miley Dye, Youth Advisory Delegate from North Central Presbytery and Jack Murphy, Midsouth Presbytery brought the devotionals on Thursday morning.

6. Reverend Kathy Lofton, worship director for General Assembly, delivered the closing devotional based on John 14:15-31.

OUR UNITED OUTREACH

7. Held an *OUO Lunch and Learn* meal during GA week. The Reverend Jeff McMichael, Development Coordinator for OUO, served as master of ceremonies. In his opening comments he announced the purpose of the luncheon: to educate, promote, and encourage those in attendance “to be part of something bigger than themselves.”

8. Approved a goal of \$2,400,000 for Our United Outreach (OUO) in 2027.

9. Encouraged all congregations to provide financial support to Our United Outreach, as they are able.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

10. Formed a new synod named *Synod of the Nations*, consisting of the following presbyteries: Andes, Emaus, and Cauca Valley.

11. Appointed a special committee to oversee the convening and coordination of the inaugural meeting of the new Synod of the Nations on July 11.

12. Adjusted the presbytery composition of Mission Synod to reflect the removal of Andes, Emaus and Cauca Valley presbyteries.

13. With the approval of the formation of the new Synod, the General Assembly receives as information that the Ministry Council intends to recommend to the 196th General Assembly, for its approval, changes to the charter and by-laws of the Ministry Council reflecting the following:

1. The Ministry Council will have two elected members from each of the six synods.
2. The size of the Council be changed from 15 members to 12 members.
3. The limits on the number of clergy and lay members will be changed to no more than 7 members of any one class.
4. The limit on gender will be changed to no more than 7 members of any one gender.

COMMISSION ON FEDERAL CHAPLAINS

14. 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.

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

16. Encouraged presbyteries and congregations to make special efforts to communicate with those members serving as chaplains from their presbytery or congregation.

MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

17. Commended the Reverend Dr. Jody Hill, President of Memphis Theological Seminary, and Reverend Kip Rush, Chairman of the Memphis Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, for their compassion and pastoral care of the students, staff, and faculty as the Seminary begins the process of closing.

18. Noted that Students can finish their degree journeys with a generous teach-out program offered by Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

19. Announced that a celebration of the sixty-plus years of ministry by the Seminary will be held on July 2, 2026.

MTS SPECIAL COMMITTEE

20. Approved the creation of the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry (BTE) and the Vision, Mission and Strategic Framework proposed for the Board.

21. Gave consent to the Amended and Restated Charter approved by the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary (MTS)

22. Adopted the Criteria for the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry in the election of members to the BTE.

23. Thanked the current members of the MTS board of trustees for their diligent service to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church during a difficult time in the life of the denomination.

24. Voted to reconstitute the board of trustees of the MTS/BTE corporation by removing the current trustees effective August 1, 2026, and electing the following (12) people to serve as the board of trustees of the MTS/BTE corporation, with the terms of office indicated below to establish an annual rotation of one-third of the board, and with these elected trustees taking office immediately after the current MTS trustees cease to serve.

Elected to a term of one year expiring 2027:

- Rev. Dr. Tom Campbell (East TN Presbytery)
- Dr. Maurice Ottinger (Robert Donnell Presbytery), tri-convenor
- Rev. Dr. Barry Anderson (Robert Donnell Presbytery)
- Kathy Wood Dobbins (Nashville Presbytery)

Elected to a term of two years expiring 2028:

- Rev. Michele Gentry (Andes Presbytery)
- Rev. Bobby Coleman (Arkansas Presbytery), tri-convenor
- Rev. Dr. Marcus Hayes (Red River Presbytery)
- Dr. Amanda Batts (Cornerstone Presbytery)

Elected to a term of three years expiring 2029:

- Kiara Castleman (Mid-South Presbytery), tri-convenor
- Rev. Mark Hester (East TN Presbytery)
- Frazier Allen (Nashville Presbytery)
- Rev. Glen Watts (Cornerstone Presbytery)

25. Approved continued funding for MTS/BTE and PAS through OOU.

26. Authorized the Special Committee created by the 194th General Assembly to continue its work as contemplated by the actions of the General Assembly in its called meeting held January 23, 2026, in Brentwood, Tennessee.

27. Amended the GA Bylaws by substituting the words “Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry” in place of the words “Memphis Theological Seminary” each time those words appear in the Bylaws.

28. That the General Assembly amend Bylaw 10.06 to read as follows: 10.06 Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry. The corporation shall elect twelve (12) directors to the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry. The corporation shall elect the directors in such a manner that, immediately following any election, at least six (6) of the directors shall be ordained ministers in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and at least three (3) of the directors shall be lay leaders.

29. Amended Bylaw 11.09 to read as follows: 11.09 Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns. The committee shall consist of the Stated Clerk, the President/Executive Director of the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry, and eight (8) members elected by the corporation.

30. Encouraged the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry to develop an evaluation and accountability system for its programs.

BETHEL UNIVERSITY

31. Urged presbyteries worldwide to share Bethel University’s Mission to support Bethel University in prayers, financial support and in recommending students.

CUMBERLAND YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

32. 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.

33. Expressed great appreciation to Brian Martin and Guin Tyus for their nine years of service on the Board of Trustees.

34. Reinstated Cumberland Youth and Family Service Sunday on the Church Calendar for the third Sunday in August.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

35. Commended Susan Knight Gore and the Historical Foundation for their continued work of archiving our vital church history, both past and present.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION & BENEFITS

- 36. Expressed gratitude and thanks to the staff of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits for all their diligent work.
- 37. Encouraged all congregations to support their ministers and church staff, by establishing a retirement account.
- 38. Encouraged all presbyteries to determine if a retired pastor or spouse could benefit from the Cumberland Presbyterian Ministerial Aid Program and work with the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits in assisting qualified people to enroll in the program.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS

- 39. Approved sending the following proposed change to the Rules of Discipline, to the presbyteries for ratification. That Rules of Discipline 3.402 be amended to read:
“A complaint of misconduct on the part of a minister should be reported to the stated clerk of the presbytery or a member of the disciplinary commission. The person who receives the complaint shall promptly communicate it to the chair of the disciplinary commission and the stated clerk. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the disciplinary commission shall complete its work and prepare a report for the judiciary committee within 90 days of the stated clerk receiving the report.”

JUDICIARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 40. Approved that the Permanent Committee on Judiciary (PJC) officers in consultation with the Stated Clerk provide or designate formal onboarding/training for all newly elected PJC members, including scope of responsibility, workflow, expectations for advisory opinions, recusal standards, and communication protocols.
- 41. That the following be inserted to the GA Bylaw 11.05(05):
 - a. A committee member shall be recused from any appeal if the member:
 - (i) has had any personal involvement in facts or circumstances substantially related to the appeal;
 - (ii) shares a close personal, familial, or professional relationship with any party involved;
 - (iii) has a conflict of interest under Rules of Order 12.5 or Rules of Discipline 4.002; or
 - (iv) the member's participation creates an appearance of impropriety. Holding a particular theological or doctrinal belief is not by itself a sufficient basis for recusal
- 42. A party to the appeal or a member of the committee may request the recusal of a member in writing

to the committee chair or the Stated Clerk at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the scheduled hearing or immediately upon the discovery of circumstances warranting recusal.

If a member declines a voluntary recusal, the remaining committee members may direct a recusal by two-thirds vote taken by secret ballot. The member in question may speak briefly to the question of recusal before being excused from the committee's discussion and vote.

c. A member who is recused shall not participate in any deliberations or votes and shall not discuss the matter with other members of the committee.

d. If, because of recusals or vacancies, fewer than (5) members are available to hear an appeal, the Moderator of the General Assembly shall immediately appoint one or more former Judiciary Committee members who meet the above recusal standards as temporary alternates to restore a five-member quorum solely for the duration of that specific appeal. The Moderator shall consider candidates beginning with those who have most recently served a term of office on the Judiciary Committee. The Stated Clerk shall maintain a list of former Judiciary Committee members whose term of service has ended in the previous (10) years for the use of the Moderator in making these appointments.

43. Approved that the GA Bylaw 11.05.(01) be amended effective at the beginning of the 196th General Assembly, to include that the committee shall have at least one member (1) from each synod, and a maximum of two (2) from any one synod.

44. That the Permanent Judiciary Review Committee be thanked for its work and dissolved.

TRADEMARK COMMITTEE

45. Voted to end the process for establishing a Trademark and dissolve the Trademark Committee with thanks for their diligent work.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 46. Approved the Church Calendar dates for 2026-2027 (see pages of the Preliminary Minutes).
- 47. Instructed each presbytery to remind churches of the importance of submitting their annual reports and work with churches that might need assistance in completing the report. Congregations that do not submit an annual report for three consecutive years will have a zero (0) reported in the Active Membership Column of the Yearbook, with three years no report counting starting with the 2027 Yearbook. That the Stated Clerk shall update the 2026 Yearbook to reflect the active membership from the 2024 Yearbook for non-reporting churches, excluding any churches formally closed, or transferred by their presbyteries/synods. The General Assembly Stated Clerk shall communicate this newly

adopted policy to each presbytery prior to their fall meetings and have it recorded under their Communications in their Fall 2026 minutes

THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

48. Thanked the members of the committee for their diligent work for Christ and His Kingdom.

MISCELLANEOUS

49. A Special Luncheon and Program was hosted by Memphis Theological Seminary/Program of Alternate Studies, and the Special GA MTS Committee was held on Wednesday. Reverend Dr. Michael Qualls, Director of the Program of Alternate Studies and served as Master of Ceremonies. A short presentation and remarks on the legacy of MTS was presented by Dr. Rev. Jody Hill, Memphis Theological Seminary President. Reverend Dr. Larry Blackburn, chair of the MTS GA Special Committee, spoke on the origins of theological education for Cumberland Presbyterian ministers starting in 1853 and its shift towards an ecumenical emphasis in recent years. With the closing of MTS, the CPC is once again shifting focus on the future training of Cumberland Presbyterian theological education that will equip ministers and congregations for ministry in their communities whether in the US or throughout the world.

50. The Women in Ministry Reception was held on Tuesday evening, hosted by MTS/PAS, CPWM and the Ministry Council's Pastoral Development Ministry Team. The 2026 Clergy Women of the Year recipients were announced. The international recipient was presented to the Reverend Diana Valdez (Andes Presbytery), and the USA recipient was presented to the Reverend Tera Sisco (Red River Presbytery).

51. Adopted a *Resolution of Thanks* presented by Rev. Andy McClung, Cornerstone Presbytery.

NEXT MEETING

52. The General Assembly adjourned to meet in Lexington, Kentucky on June 20-25, 2027.

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)

2026 General Assembly Theme & Logo:



Our Stories: Living Testimonies of Faith

*"...we will tell the next
generation the praiseworthy
deeds of the Lord, his power,
and the wonders he has done."*

Psalms 78:4 (NLT)

