

COMMITTEE REPORTS	PAGE
CHAPLAINS/HISTORICAL FOUNDATION	3
STEWARDSHIP/OUR UNITED OUTREACH	4
SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS	
JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS REPORT TWO	6
JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS REPORT THREE	7
JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS REPORT FOUR	11
JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS REPORT ONE	15
THEOLOGY & SOCIAL CONCERNS	19
MINISTRY COUNCIL	22
HIGHER ED/CUMBERLAND YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES	24
NOMINATING COMMITTEE (see Preliminary Minutes pages 113-115)	
MINUTES	26

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS/HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation and The Report of the Commission on Federal Chaplains.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Mrs. Susan Knight Gore, Archivist, Historical Foundation; Reverend Lisa Oliver, Historical Foundation Board Representative; CH (Col) Dennis Hysom (Retired), Executive Director of the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies (PFC), and Reverend Shelia O'Mara, representative, General Assembly Commission on Federal Chaplains.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON FEDERAL CHAPLAINS

The Chaplains/Historical Foundation Committee appreciated the opportunity to speak with Reverend Shelia O'Mara, and CH Dennis Hysom concerning the important work of our federal chaplains. Our discussions focused on the important role that chaplains play in providing care to our service men and women and the potential implications of denominational theological stances for our military chaplains. The committee also noted the shift in focus from strictly military chaplaincy to federal chaplaincy, which includes military, Veterans Affairs, and Bureau of Prisons chaplaincy programs.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Commission on Federal Chaplains, "that each USA Cumberland Presbyterian Church provide an opportunity for their congregations to receive an offering on the last Sunday of May, or another special day, to support our ministry through the PFC," be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Commission on Federal Chaplains, "that congregations of both the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America encourage their individual churches and members to designate special days through the year to engage in prayer to hold up the chaplains and their families in the service to which they have been endorsed," be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Commission on Federal Chaplains, "that clergy and Presbyterian Committees on Probationer Care, in their discussions of a call for a ministerial candidate, be encouraged to include the call to chaplaincy as a call to pastoral ministry," be adopted.

B. REPORT OF THE BOARDS OF TRUSTEES OF THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

The report of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation was received and concurred in.

The Chaplains/Historical Foundation Committee expresses appreciation and admiration for the important and complex work of the Historical Foundation and our archivist. The committee was privileged to hear from Archivist Susan Knight Gore and Reverend Lisa Oliver, Acting President of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation. Mrs. Gore highlighted the efforts of the Cooperative Project to scan and digitize some of the most fragile records of churches and presbyteries, as well as publications of the denomination. Mrs. Gore was able to address several concerns of our Colombian commissioners, including questions about submitting artifacts from Colombia for the Historical Foundation collection. As always, the preservation of our history is of critical importance for our denomination, and the committee appreciates the skillful work of the Historical Foundation.

Respectively submitted,
The Chaplains/Historical Foundation Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STEWARDSHIP/OUR UNITED OUTREACH

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits; The Report of the Our United Outreach Committee; and the 2023 Line Item Budgets Submitted by General Assembly Boards/Entities.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Reverend Robert Heflin, Executive Secretary, Reverend Brittany Meeks, Administrative Assistant and Randy Davidson, Board of Stewardship, Foundation & Benefits; Reverend Cliff Hudson, Director OUO, Rev. Jeff McMichael, Regional Representative, and Mikel Davis, representative Our United Outreach Committee; Edith Old, Director of Ministries, Reverend Pam Phillips-Burk, Pastoral Development Ministry Team Leader, Reverend Milton Ortiz, Missions Ministry Team Leader, and Reverend Juan David Correa, representative Ministry Council. We wish to express our appreciation to the persons of counsel for their presentations and advisement.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP, FOUNDATION AND BENEFITS

The report was reviewed and received. The committee met with Reverend Robert Heflin, Reverend Randy Davidson, and Reverend Brittany Meeks. Careful review of the report was made. The ongoing benefits of endowment funding was discussed in detail. Our provision of ministerial assistance for our international ministers and representatives was discussed with the persons of counsel. We are grateful for the careful work of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits and appreciative of the input given by the persons who appeared before our committee in counsel.

B. THE REPORT OF THE OUR UNITED OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The committee met with Reverend Cliff Hudson, Reverend Jeff McMichael and Reverend Mikel Davis. The allocation of funds was discussed in detail. Special focus was given to the fact that the agencies and entities receiving OUO allocations had representation and input regarding their needs and their allocations. It was also noted that detailed line-item budgets for each agency and entity are provided to delineate the further breakdown of how these allocations are used within their various ministries.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR UNITED OUTREACH

A review of the Stewardship and Our United Outreach reports offer just a glimpse of the many and varied ways that God is at work in the world through the many wonderful ministries of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It also reminds us that these exciting and varied ministries need funding in order to go and grow. Our United Outreach offers every congregation, every presbytery, and even every individual a way to give what we can to every single ministry of our denomination. We commend all congregations who support these ministries through their tithe to OUO. And we encourage every congregation to give what they can.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the 192nd General Assembly encourage all congregations to provide financial support to Our United Outreach as they are able.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Our United Outreach Committee, “that General Assembly adopt the following Our United Outreach allocations for 2023:

Amount to be Allocated	2,500,000.00	
Ministry Council	\$1,203,978	48.159%
Bethel University	120,398	4.816%
Children’s Home	72,239	2.890%

Stewardship	144,477	5.779%
General Assembly Office	192,636	7.705%
Memphis Theological Seminary/ Program of Alternate Studies	168,557	6.742%
Historical Foundation	72,239	2.890%
Shared Services	385,273	15.411%
Contingency	12,040	0.482%
OUO Committee	92,044	3.682%
Comm. On Chaplains	13,990	0.560%
Judiciary Committee	13,196	0.528%
Theology/Social Concern	4,912	0.196%
Nominating Committee	4,021	0.161%
Our United Outreach Goal	\$2,500,000	100.000%

(From the entities listed above, all should be self-explanatory except maybe Shared Services. Maintenance, utilities, mowing, trash pick-up, pest extermination, and custodial are all examples of Shared Services for entities housed in the Cumberland Presbyterian Center.),” be adopted.

C. 2023 LINE ITEM BUDGETS SUBMITTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ENTITIES

The line-item budgets for the year (2023) and the proposed line-item budgets for the coming year (2024) submitted by General Assembly entities were reviewed and received.

D. We commend the diligent work of the Board of Stewardship and Our United Outreach Committee for their management of the funding required for the work of Christian Ministry. Our review of current funding needs and provision, and our consultation with persons of counsel caused us to see a need for the support of our international ministers and representatives who must travel long distances to attend General Assembly. Therefore, in concert with the Missions Ministry Team, we make the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Missions Ministry Team establish an endowment for the purpose of assisting international commissioners, elders, ministers, and youth delegates to offset the expense of attending General Assembly. This endowment will be named the John and Joyce Lovelace, Boyce and Beth Wallace and Bill and Katherine Wood Endowment Fund.

RECOMMENDATION 4: We further recommend that the missions ministry team be encouraged to promote this endowment across all presbyteries.

Respectfully submitted,
The Stewardship/Elected Officers/OUO Committee

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS

The Joint Committee on Amendments met June 21, 2023, in Denton, Texas, and by video-conference. Representing the CPCA were Willie Cowan, Lewis Cole, and Ann Pierre. Representing the CPC were Geoff Knight, Harry Chapman, Roger Reid, Bill Tally, and Rachel Moses (Secretary). In accordance with the CPC General Assembly Bylaws, Harry Chapman and Rachel Moses were present as non-voting members. Also present were Vanessa Midgett (Stated Clerk, CPCA), Michael Jones (Moderator, CPCA), Mike Sharpe (Stated Clerk, CPC), Mitch Bolton (Moderator, CPC), Mike Wilkinson (immediate past Moderator, CPC), and Jaime Jordan (General Counsel, CPC).

The meeting was called to order by Willie Cowan and was opened with prayer by Bill Tally.

I. REFERRALS

The Joint Committee reviewed the proposed constitutional amendments referred to it by the 191st CPC General Assembly (*See pages 141-142 of the 2023 Preliminary Minutes*) and specific wording for the proposed amendments prepared and recommended by the CPC Judiciary Committee in its separate meeting held March 6, 2023.

After discussion, Geoff Knight made the following motion:

That the proposed constitutional amendments referred to the Joint Committee on Amendments by the 191st CPC General Assembly, as prepared and set forth below, be transmitted to the 192nd CPC General Assembly for its consideration:

1. That the Constitution be amended by adding the following Paragraph 2.92 and renumbering subsequent sections as appropriate:

2.92 When a person is in a sexual relationship that is outside the boundaries of marriage as described in the Confession of Faith 6.17, then such a situation makes that person ineligible to be ordained to the office of elder.

2. That the Constitution be amended by adding the following sentence at the end of the current Paragraph 2.73:

When a person is in a sexual relationship that is outside the boundaries of marriage as described in the Confession of Faith 6.17, then such a situation makes that person ineligible to serve as an elder on the session of a church.

3. That the Constitution be amended by adding the following Paragraph 6.35 and renumbering subsequent sections as appropriate:

6.35 No licentiate shall be ordained who is in a sexual relationship that is outside the boundaries of marriage as described in the Confession of Faith 6.17. Such a situation makes that person ineligible to be ordained as a minister in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

4. That the Constitution be amended by adding the following new Paragraph 7.02 and renumbering subsequent sections as appropriate:

7.02 When a person is in a sexual relationship that is outside the boundaries of marriage as described in the Confession of Faith 6.17, then such a situation makes that person ineligible to serve a church in any of the relationships stated in 7.01.

The Motion was seconded by Bill Tally. A vote was taken and the Motion passed.

It was then moved and seconded that the committee meeting be adjourned.

Reverend Michael Jones delivered the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
The Joint Committee on Amendments

**See pages 141-142 of the 2023 Preliminary Minutes for text of the memorial..*

REPORT TWO OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee addressed in Report Two are as follows: The Report of the Joint Committee on Amendments; and The Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee;

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before the committee were: Geoffrey Knight, Permanent Committee on Judiciary, CPC; Willy Cowan, Permanent Committee on Judiciary, CPCA; Harry Chapman, Parliamentarian; Mike Sharpe, Stated Clerk; Mike Wilkinson, Retiring Moderator; and Jamie Jordan, General Counsel.

We wish to express our appreciation to the persons of counsel for their presentations.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS

The committee received the report and discussed with the representative from the Permanent Committee from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the representative from the Permanent Committee from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America. The committee expressed its thanks to the members of the Permanent Committee for their work.

B. THE JOINT REPORT FROM THE CPCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY BOARD OF JUDICIARY

The committee received a follow-up communication from the CPCA Board following the review and discussion of The Report of the Joint Committee on Amendments. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the CPCA Board for its report. The report was received as communication with no other action taken.

C. REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The committee received the report and discussed with the representatives from the Permanent Committees from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

Respectfully submitted,
The Judiciary Committee

REPORT THREE OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee considered in Report Three are as follows: The Memorial from Cornerstone Presbytery Regarding Welcoming Cumberland Presbyterian Website; The Memorial from Cauca Valley Presbytery Regarding Homosexuality Within the Church; and The Memorial from Arkansas Presbytery Regarding “Cumberland Presbyterian” Branding.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

No Persons of Counsel appeared before the committee for deliberations on the listed referrals.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

The committee received communications from two individuals regarding its work, from Michael Leslie, dated June 18, 2023, and from Tom D. Campbell, dated June 18, 2023. No actions were taken related to these communications.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. THE MEMORIAL FROM CORNERSTONE PRESBYTERY REGARDING WELCOMING CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIANS WEBSITE

The Committee received the Memorial and discussed at length.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Memorial from Cornerstone Presbytery which states:

WHEREAS the website Welcoming Cumberland Presbyterians presents a worldview which is in alignment with the every-shifting culture, and not with the Church’s Confession of Faith, and our understanding of the Scriptures, as explained in the Church’s Confession of Faith; and

WHEREAS the 1996 General Assembly Statement on homosexuality clearly states that homosexuality is incompatible with a Christian lifestyle and this remains the worldview of our denomination on the issues associated with homosexuality and with all the tenets of the LGBTQ movement; and

WHEREAS the official website of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (cumberland.org) has no statement on its home page which makes clear that the unofficial website, Welcoming Cumberland Presbyterians, does not present the correct worldview of our denomination; and

WHEREAS it seems both reasonable and necessary that such a website as Welcoming Cumberland Presbyterians should be identified on the official home page of our denominational website as being one which presents a worldview held only by a minority of persons in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and that the website, Welcoming Cumberland Presbyterians, is explicitly not endorsed, promoted, or sanctioned by the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church direct the Office of the General Assembly to immediately and permanently include the following statement on the home page of our denominational website:

“Important Notice: The website, Welcoming Cumberland Presbyterians (welcomingcps.org), does not represent the official position of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on the subject of human sexuality, homosexuality, transgenderism, or other issues related to the LGBTQ movement, and is explicitly not sanctioned, endorsed, or approved by the General Assembly,” be denied.

The committee supports taking steps to protect the identity of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and recommends broadening the language to include any entity using Cumberland Presbyterian in its digital messaging. The committee offers the following substitute recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church direct the Office of the General Assembly to immediately and permanently include the following statement on the home page of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church denominational website:

“The website cumberland.org is the ONLY official web page of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church denomination, and the content included herein represents the official position(s) of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.” (Note to the Office of the General Assembly for clarity: it is the intent of the recommendation that the word “only” be highlighted in the web page statement. Example: If the full statement is boldened, the word “only” is to be fully capitalized to stand out from other statement text.)

B. THE MEMORIAL FROM CAUCA VALLEY PRESBYTERY REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY WITHIN THE CHURCH

The Committee received the Memorial and discussed at length.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Memorial from Cauca Valley Presbytery which states:

WHEREAS, the Word of God is the only rule of faith and practice for Christians and it condemns homosexuality as a sin. This being so, the Bible is the filter of modern culture and not the other way around.

WHEREAS, the homosexual lifestyle is not in keeping with Christian lifestyle and principles. That the homosexual individual is welcome in our ecclesiastical communities for the purpose of developing a relationship with Jesus that evidences transformation and change, but not in the ministries because homosexuality is considered a sin that must be repented of, and that, by practicing it, said individual ceases to be an example for God’s flock. By the very deliberate practice of a sin.

WHEREAS, the Cumberland Presbyterian Churches outside the United States are seriously concerned about the unity of our church family in terms of doctrine and practice regarding homosexuality and the ministry of Word and Sacrament (Confession of Faith 5.00 numerals 5.01, 5.02, 5.03). This should not lend itself to the deception that to embrace the same understanding of Christian doctrine and practice is to fall into uniformity. On the contrary, it allows us to be of one mind as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:10).

WHEREAS, a faction made up of ministers, elders, leaders and members of a few Cumberland Presbyterian Churches, have been making efforts to ensure the adoption of progressive ideas and worldly and secular ideologies that have nothing to do with the Christian way of life and that by continuing to give openness to pro-homosexual line of thinking, the integrity of the Global mission could be fractured, running the risk that the CPC could end up losing the Global Church, given that many presbyteries will not follow this path of worldly thinking. It is worth mentioning that moving forward with such pro-LGBTQ+ efforts regardless of the serious consequences mentioned above, reveals the little love of its promoters for the work that God has been building over two centuries. It also shows contempt for the missions, mission fields, churches, and the beautiful Cumberland Presbyterian ministries across the globe. That is, to continue to act this way, with the implementation of an agenda of LGBTQ+ acceptance in ministerial positions, reveals a worldly individualistic attitude and not a godly one befitting the Body of Christ. The insistence on the part of the liberal line, despite the blunt refusal of the church family to accept homosexual life values is notorious. In this way, the “tolerant” are intolerant, as they have tried to impose their immoral sexual values on the majority who do not think the same way, since welcoming practicing homosexuals and/or militant members of the LGBTQ+ community to ministerial positions would only be possible by violating our consciences and biblical values. Is that really what they want? To violate the conscience and conviction of those they consider brothers and sisters in faith?

WHEREAS, it is the duty and responsibility of the General Assembly to receive and decide all appeals, protests, and inquiries duly filed by the lower courts, and to bear testimony against erroneous doctrines and immoral practices that are adversely affecting the church and interpretation of the Constitution. To decide all controversies relating to doctrine, discipline, church property, and interpretation of the Constitution. To give advice and instruction according to the government of the church in all cases submitted, to see that inferior courts serve the government of the church and call attention to breaches of order, to settle schismatic contentions and disputes, according to the government and discipline of the church, to watch over all the affairs of the whole church, to communicate with other churches, and in general to recommend measures to promote love, truth, and holiness in all churches under its care (Constitution 9. 4 literal a, b, c, e, g, g, k, m, n, o).

WHEREAS, this court and the denomination is not pro-homosexual (1996 Statement on Homosexuality), yet regardless of what the General Assembly determines, many ministers, elders, deacons and/or leaders go out and

do as they see fit in ministerial practice without facing consequences. revealing a defiant attitude, without love for authority, a disobedient heart and whose only interest is to fulfill their individualistic interests at all costs. This reveals that the General Assembly has lost its capacity for action to guarantee the welfare of the Church, since it is worrisome how ministers, elders and deacons living in homosexual lifestyles are ordained and no one says anything about it. The ability to implement discipline in our denomination has been lost. There will be dire consequences if presbyteries and the General Assembly do not take seriously their responsibility to discipline deacons, elders and ministers who are out of order in gender related issues (Constitution 2.70, 2.73, 2.80, 2.83). The church outside the United States knows of homosexual marriage ceremonies in which churches and presbyteries have rebelliously ignored the decisions and positions of the General Assembly.

THEREFORE, we urge that the General Assembly assume its responsibility to safeguard Christian doctrine and morality as expressed in human sexuality between a man and a woman by advising all churches under its authority through written and digital communication on the General Assembly website regarding the following:

What should be the procedure, consistent with the guidelines of the Word of God and Confession of Faith, of churches and presbyteries with respect to homosexual ministers, deacons and elders who are in ministerial practice and who, in turn, promote a homosexual lifestyle within the Churches.

Imperatively request the administrators of websites and accounts on social networks such as Instagram, Facebook and others that promote the homosexual lifestyle to stop using the institutional image (logo, colors, slogans, and any other resource that represents the CPC) and to stop publishing in the name of the denomination given that the position of the GA is that the homosexual lifestyle is incompatible with the Christian lifestyle.

Sending letters of protest to the presbyteries and churches that are ordaining homosexual ministers, elders, and deacons or the same who are in the process of ordination and explain to them that such action is out of order and **how such behavior affects the whole Body of Christ,** be referred to the Permanent Committee on Judiciary for further consideration and input from legal counsel, and that the Permanent Committee on Judiciary provide a report to the 193rd General Assembly regarding the Memorial.

C. THE MEMORIAL FROM ARKANSAS PRESBYTERY REGARDING "CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN" BRANDING

The Committee received the Memorial and discussed at length.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That the Memorial from Arkansas Presbytery which states:

WHEREAS, given the nature that the words "Cumberland Presbyterian" represent a system of faith, a system of government, and a system of discipline that has been developed and decided on within a connectional system of judicatories, it is important that when the words "Cumberland Presbyterian" are used, that they represent the decisions made within that connectional system of judicatories. It is important that when entities use the words "Cumberland Presbyterian", that these entities are subject to the direction and discipline of the system of judicatories found within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

WHEREAS, given that the words "Cumberland Presbyterian" are not currently a registered trademark of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, these words can, have been, and will continued to be used by entities outside the direction and discipline of any judicatory within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following recommendations be adopted by the 2023 Meeting of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church:

Recommendation 1: That the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church be instructed to begin the process and to complete the process of filing and registering as a trademark the words, "Cumberland Presbyterian."

Recommendation 2: That the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly be given the authority to carry out whatever tasks and requests are necessary to complete this task in conjunction with the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian in America.

Recommendation 3: That upon the completion of the filing and registering of "Cumberland Presbyterian" as a trademark; that such trademark be held in common with, and for use by, both the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

Recommendation 4: That the stated clerk be instructed to begin this process immediately, and also that they be instructed to give updates to each following meeting of General Assembly until the filing and registering of “Cumberland Presbyterian” as a Trademark is complete,” be referred to the Office of the General Assembly to investigate the pros, cons, cost, and benefits, legal ramifications, and effects on the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, including the global church, if this were enacted. The Office of the General Assembly is to prepare this study for presentation to the 193rd General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,
The Judiciary Committee

REPORT FOUR OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee considered in Report Four are as follows: The Resolution from Matthew McDonell, Elder Commissioner from del Cristo Presbytery; The Resolution from Joyce Merritt, Minister Delegate from Murfreesboro Presbytery; The Resolution from Byron Forester, Minister Delegate from Midsouth Presbytery, and The Resolution from Earl Goodwin, Minister Delegate from Robert Donnell Presbytery.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Jamie Jordan appeared before the committee for deliberations on the listed referrals related to these communications.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

The committee received communications from two individuals regarding its work, from Michael Leslie, dated June 18, 2023, and from Tom D. Campbell, dated June 18, 2023. No actions were taken related to these communications.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. THE RESOLUTION FROM MATTHEW MCDONELL, TITLED REAFFIRMATION OF AUTHORITY OF SESSION AND PRESBYTERY TO ORDAIN

The committee received and discussed the resolution at length.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Resolution from Matthew McDonell which states:

“Whereas article 5.02 of the Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church reads:

“The church is one because her Head and Lord is one, Jesus Christ. Here 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”,

Whereas article 5.08 of the Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church reads in part that: “...the church in the world consists of persons who are imperfect in knowledge and in the power to do God’s will” which sentiment is in accordance with the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians that “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.

Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12),

Whereas devoted and faithful Christians may come to differences in interpretation, conviction, and appropriate responses on any number of points of doctrine, among which is the question of limiting access to the life of worship, the sacraments, and the ministry of Christians who identify as gender and/or sexuality minorities,

Whereas our Lord prayed for the unity of the church and scripture proclaims that our witness to the world is in our unity and love for one another,

Whereas the Constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church grants the role and authority to ordain ministers to the Presbytery in which the minister will serve, and the nomination and election of elders to the church in which the elder will serve,

Whereas we believe the Holy Spirit to be faithful to grant wisdom and guidance to any church or presbytery who sincerely ask for and seek it in discerning the calling to ministry of any individual presented for ordination as elder or minister serving in a particular presbytery,

Whereas the 1996 General Assembly Statement on Homosexuality as passed included the provision: “This statement is to be understood as a theological and social statement and not to be understood as a rule or principle for ordination but never to usurp the authority of presbytery or session to ordain”,

Therefore, be it resolved:

The General Assembly affirms that the authority to ordain, discipline, and remove ordination credentials from ministers and elders shall remain with the presbytery and session as stated in the 1996 statement, not to be usurped

through action of the general Assembly or by calls for action coming from outside the presbytery (in the case of ministers) or congregation (in the case of elders) in which the ordained individual is serving.

Respectfully submitted by,

Matthew McDonell, elder elected as commissioner from del Cristo Presbytery," be adopted.

B. THE RESOLUTION FROM JOYCE MERRITT, TITLED A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A PERIOD OF PRAYER, DIALOGUE, RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT, AND DISCERNMENT OF GOD'S WILL FOR GOD'S CHURCH

The committee received and discussed the resolution at length, in consultation with counsel.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Resolution from Joyce Merritt which states,

Whereas the church acknowledges the ongoing discussions and conflicts surrounding the exclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals and recognizes the need for a thoughtful and discerning response,

Whereas there are sincere individuals on all sides of this issue who are struggling to understand one another and determine the appropriate course of action for the church,

Whereas Jesus prayed for the unity of the church, emphasizing its fundamental importance to our faith,

Whereas Jesus commanded us to love one another, necessitating the cultivation of an environment of understanding and respect among all members of the church, regardless of their position on these matters,

Whereas prayerful reflection and open dialogue are vital in discerning the appropriate response of the church to issues related to LGBTQ+ exclusion,

Whereas Jesus taught the significance of love, compassion, and concern for the marginalized, which should guide our interactions within the church,

Whereas unity and reconciliation within the church are crucial, and we strive to maintain a faithful witness that extends to all communities, including those marginalized due to their sexual orientation or gender identity,

Whereas any decision made by this assembly, particularly if rushed, can have significant and potentially harmful consequences for the church's unity and its ability to attract seekers, Therefore, be it resolved:

The General Assembly hereby calls for a five-year period of prayer, dialogue, and respectful engagement among its members regarding issues of LGBTQ+ exclusion.

The church acknowledges that decisions concerning LGBTQ+ inclusion have the potential to alienate a significant part of the church and impact our siblings in Christ with whom we may disagree. Therefore, any potential resolutions or constitutional changes on these matters shall be postponed until the 2028 General Assembly convenes, allowing for careful and deliberate consideration.

During this period, the church, its judicatories, and its members are strongly encouraged to engage in prayer for and with one another. Additionally, open and respectful conversations and listening sessions shall be fostered to promote genuine understanding and empathy for diverse perspectives, with a focus on seeking common ground while acknowledging differences. The members of the church and its judicatories will be asked to commit themselves to creating an atmosphere of respect, compassion, and understanding throughout this period.

The church, its groups, and individual members should earnestly pray for guidance, seeking the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as we navigate these complex issues. Our ultimate goal is to foster the unity of the church, while upholding God's Word and respecting personal conscience in matters of faith and practice," be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendations 3-7 as listed in the Resolution be referred to the Unified Committee on Social and Theological Concerns, with all references to a five-year moratorium removed. The Unified Committee is directed to study the Resolution and provide its recommendations for implementation in a full report to the 195th General Assembly and provide annual updates to General Assembly in the years leading up to release of its full report to the 195th General Assembly.

C. THE RESOLUTION FROM BYRON FORESTER, TITLED A RESOLUTION CONCERNING MEMORIALS TO THE 192ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY SEEKING TO BAR MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY FROM ANSWERING GOD'S CALL TO SERVICE AND MINISTRY IN THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The committee received and discussed the resolution at length, in consultation with counsel.

The committee affirms that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, with its proud and long heritage of Medium

Theology, is mandated to minister to all people.

We agree to Differ; We are Resolved to Love; We are United to Serve.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Resolution from Byron Forester which states:

WHEREAS, the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church will be considering several memorials, the ultimate intention of which is to deny members of the LGBTQ+ community the opportunity to answer God’s call to service and ministry in the denomination; and

WHEREAS, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church has, from its humble beginnings, been a denomination concerned with doing ministry on “frontiers”, with an openness to diversity and tolerance regarding understandings of scripture in favor of its imperative to share the good news with all God’s children, regardless of how they may differ from us; and

Whereas, Paragraph 5.02 of the Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church reads: “The church is one because her Head and Lord is one, Jesus Christ. Here 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”; and

WHEREAS, Biblical scholars of the last two to three decades—some respected Cumberland Presbyterians among them—have increasingly called into question traditionally held interpretations of many of the Bible passages often used to characterize homosexuality as “sinful” or an “abomination”; and

WHEREAS, Cumberland Presbyterians look with reverence to the saints who have articulated our faith in ways that help us to understand who we are in relation to God—saints such as Theologian Rev. Dr. Hubert Morrow who, in his treatise *The Confession of Faith in Cumberland Presbyterian History*, pointed out the importance of remembering “at all times that [the] Confession of Faith is a ‘document of human composure,’ and therefore reflects the imperfections and limits of human understanding”, and that “[i]t should never become a ‘paper pope’”.

WHEREAS, we worship a loving God and God’s son, Christ our Savior, who modeled for us an exemplary life of seeking peace and justice—a Savior who eschewed worship of the Law and “organized” religion in favor of unconditional love for the vulnerable and marginalized people of the world; and

WHEREAS, there are members of the LGBTQ+ community who have already answered God’s call to service and ministry and are currently serving the Cumberland Presbyterian Church faithfully and competently in a variety of leadership capacities in almost every presbytery—persons whose sexuality may be known or unknown to their siblings in Christ—and passage of the amendments in question would necessarily require that our denomination embark on formal, intrusive investigations in order to find them, somehow determine their sexual orientation, and potentially to dismiss them publicly “for cause” based on our findings; and

WHEREAS, the changes being proposed to our Constitution and Confession of Faith would codify sexual mores applicable not only to members of the LGBTQ+ community, but to all Cumberland Presbyterians, and would thus also require investigation of any sexual activity/history not conforming to those mores; and

WHEREAS, such investigations of Cumberland Presbyterians suspected/accused of violating the codified sexual mores—regardless of their sexual orientation—would consume precious time and diminished resources that, surely, we all agree God would prefer we spend sharing the good news with a world desperately in need of it, that is, with all of God’s children; and

WHEREAS, such investigations—as well as the group of amendments that, if passed, would require them—are unlikely to remain secret, would proclaim publicly that “neither Christian nor unchurched members of the LGBTQ+ are welcome here, and God’s grace is not available to you in this denomination”; and

WHEREAS, there have been many harmful, untrue, and cruel statements uttered concerning the efforts of numerous Cumberland Presbyterians to help guide our denomination to a place of harmony and tolerance on the LGBTQ+ issue, including false charges that those in favor of affirming persons as God created them to be wish to “force” others to adopt their understanding of scripture and are “pushing” for division within the church, when in reality affirming Cumberland Presbyterians merely wish to be granted the freedom not to have their God-given conscience bound on this issue; and

WHEREAS, adoption of the memorials that in effect question God’s call upon the lives of faithful Christian members of the LGBTQ+ community wishing to serve and minister in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church would require us—for the first time in our history, and uniquely among our mainstream reformed tradition siblings—to add exclusionary language to our Constitution and Confession of Faith, leading thoughtful Christians understandably to question, “who might the Cumberland Presbyterian Church exclude next?”; and

WHEREAS, there is more than ample evidence that overt and concerted efforts to exclude members of the LGBTQ+ community from living authentically in a community of faith has caused irreparable harm, driving victims of such abuse to self-harm, mental illness, and even suicide; and

WHEREAS, there are many Cumberland Presbyterians who, through study of the writings of the Bible in their historical settings, through comparing scripture with scripture, through listening to the witness of the church throughout the centuries, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and sharing insights with others in the covenant community—as our Confession requires—have come to embrace affirmation and inclusion of members of the LGBTQ+ community as God’s will for God’s church in the 21st century,
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church adopt the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Cumberland Presbyterian Church abandon all efforts to codify exclusionary language in either our Constitution or our Confession of Faith.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That, following the example of the Prince of Peace himself, the denomination turn itself to healing and reconciliation between those who are affirming and those who are non-affirming with respect to the LGBTQ+ community.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Cumberland Presbyterian Church identify itself as a denomination that maintains space for both affirming and non-affirming congregations and presbyteries, as the persons comprising those entities feel led by God,” be denied.

D. THE RESOLUTION FROM EARL GOODWIN, TITLED ADOPTION OF LGBTQ+ SOLIDARITY SUNDAY

The committee received the resolution, and at the request of the author, the Resolution was withdrawn.

As the Church is the voice for the oppressed, and the hope for threatened and marginalized across all walks of life, the committee urges the General Assembly to adopt the following Resolution:

RECOMMENDATION 5: BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Cumberland Presbyterian Church encourages all members, congregations, and affiliated institutions, to commit to practicing non-violence in their own lives, and to speak out against violent speech and violent actions directed at any individual or group of individuals, and to share this Resolution with all congregations, affiliated institutions, and denominational bodies, and promote its adoption.

The committee thanks the Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk for its assistance this week, and through the years.

Respectfully submitted,
 The Judiciary Committee

REPORT ONE OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee addressed in Report One are as follows: The Report of the Moderator; The Report of the Stated Clerk; and The Report of the Place of Meeting Committee.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before the committee were: Geoffrey Knight, Permanent Committee on Judiciary, CPC; Willy Cowan, Permanent Committee on Judiciary, CPCA; Harry Chapman, Parliamentarian; Mike Sharpe, Stated Clerk; Mike Wilkinson, Retiring Moderator; and Jamie Jordan, General Counsel.

We wish to express our appreciation to the persons of counsel for their presentations.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

The committee reviewed and discussed the Report and thanked the Moderator for his report.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Moderator, “that regardless of the outcome of the vote on the proposed constitutional amendments, the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church instruct the Permanent Judiciary Committee to compile all existing steps for a congregation to leave the Cumberland Presbyterian Church or change presbyterial affiliation or form new presbyteries. In addition to compiling existing guidelines, the Permanent Judiciary Committee, in cooperation with a representative of the Ministry Council (the programming arm of the Church, elected by the Council itself), and a representative of the Board of Stewardship, Foundations and Benefits (responsible for the management of the Church’s financial resources and benefits to ministers and employees, elected by the Board itself), to develop additional guidance for congregations that in the future may want to disaffiliate with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church or one of its presbyteries. This guidance should also include how to affiliate with another denomination or another presbytery within our denomination or simply become independent or form a new union (denomination). The Permanent Judiciary Committee must present a detailed report to the 193rd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That regardless of the outcome of the vote on the proposed constitutional amendments, the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church instruct the Permanent Judiciary Committee to compile all existing steps for a congregation to leave the Cumberland Presbyterian Church or change presbyterial affiliation or form new presbyteries. In addition to compiling existing guidelines, the Permanent Judiciary Committee, in cooperation with a representative of the Ministry Council (the programming arm of the Church, elected by the Council, itself), and a representative of the Board of Stewardship, Foundations and Benefits (responsible for the management of the Church’s financial resources and benefits for ministers and employees, elected by the Board itself), to develop additional guidelines for congregations that in the future may want to disaffiliate with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church or one of its presbyteries. This guidance should also include how to affiliate with another denomination or another presbytery within our denomination or simply become independent or form a new union (denomination). The Permanent Judiciary Committee must present a detailed report for the 193rd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

After much discussion, the committee offered a substitute recommendation reflecting an objective to not promote actions encouraging disaffiliation of churches within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. While we recognize that separation may be necessary, we hope to de-emphasize strategies for separation of Cumberland Presbyterian churches and presbyteries one from another, but yet prepare to offer guidance to help churches and presbyteries move forward in continuing to minister to the communities and individuals in their care when considering separation:

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church instruct the Permanent Judiciary Committee to compile all existing constitutional steps required for a congregation to change presbyterial affiliation, form a new presbytery, or in the extreme circumstance, leave the Cumberland Presbyterian Church denomination, and make this compilation available to Cumberland Presbyterian churches and presbyteries. Additionally, the Permanent Judiciary Committee will, in cooperation with the Ministry Council, and representatives from the Board of Stewardship, Foundations, and Benefits, develop additional guidance for congregations who may desire to disaffiliate either with its presbytery, or the denomination, or affiliate with another presbytery within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church denomination if a congregation so chooses. The Permanent Judiciary Committee is to present a detailed report on Guidance for Congregations and Presbyteries Considering Separation to the 193rd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

B. REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

The Committee spoke with the Reverend Duawn Mearns, Moderator of the 190th General Assembly. Reverend Mearns spoke of how his gratitude and respect for our denomination has grown. We thank Reverend Mearns for his service. The report of the Moderator was received and concurred in.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, “that the 192nd General Assembly adopt the proposed Vision of Ministry and Strategy Action Plan for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, “that GA Bylaw 11.07 be amended to read:
11.07 Place of Meeting. The committee shall consist of the Moderator and the Stated Clerk,” be adopted..

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, “that GA Bylaw 11.08 be amended to read:

11.08 Program Committee. The committee shall consist of the Moderator, Stated Clerk, Director of Ministries, Assistant to the Stated Clerk who serves as secretary, the pastor of the host church, and one representative designated by each of the following: Bethel University, Board of Stewardship, Foundation, and Benefits, Cumberland Presbyterian Children’s Home, Historical Foundation, Memphis Theological Seminary, and the Ministry Council. The committee will begin planning for two years prior to the meeting of a particular General Assembly,” be approved, with an editorial change to strike “Cumberland Presbyterian Children’s Home” and replace with “Cumberland Youth and Family Services”.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 4 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, “that the 192nd General Assembly approve the following dates for the 2023-2024 Church Calendar:

CHURCH CALENDAR 2023-2024

July-2023

2-7	CPYC at Bethel University
7-8	CPYC 100-Year Celebration at Bethel University
9	Program of Alternate Studies Graduation, 1st CP Church, McKenzie, Tennessee
8-22	PAS Summer Extension School, Bethel University
10	Summer Session - 2nd term begins Bethel University
10-14	D.Min. Residency Memphis Theological Seminary
15	Children’s Fest at Bethel University
20	CP Reflections, Ministry Council Facebook Page
27	CP Reflections Roundtable Discussion, Ministry Council Facebook Page

August-2023

1-Sept 30	Christian Education Season
5	Bethel University Commencement
14	Bethel University Fall Semester Begins
20	Seminary/PAS Sunday

21 MTS Fall Semester Begins**September-2023**

- 10 Senior Adult Sunday**
17 Christian Service Recognition Sunday

October-2023

- Church Paper Month**
Clergy Appreciation Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
1 Worldwide Communion Sunday
8 Pastor Appreciation Sunday
10 A Day at the Park
22 Native American Sunday

November-2023

- Any Sunday Loaves and Fishes Program**
1 All Saints Day
3 World Community Day (Church Women United)
5 Bethel University Sunday
5 Stewardship Sunday
12 Day of Prayer for People with Aids and Other Life-Threatening Illnesses
19 Bible Sunday
Loaves and Fishes Offering

December-2023

- Any Sunday Gift to the King Offering**
2 Bethel University Commencement
3-Dec 24 Advent in Church and Home
23 Gift to the King Offering
24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day

January-2024

- 6 Epiphany**
7 Human Trafficking Awareness Day
8-9 Stated Clerks' Conference
8 BU Spring Semester Begins
15 Deadline for receipt of 2023 Our United Outreach Contributions
21 Family Sunday
22 MTS Classes Begin

February-2024

- Black History Month**
1 Annual congregational reports due in General Assembly office
4 Denomination Day
4 Historical Foundation Offering
11 Our United Outreach Sunday
14-Mar 31 Ash Wednesday
Lent to Easter

March-2024

- Women's History Month (USA)**
1 World Day of Prayer (CWU)

18
24 **Palm/Passion Sunday**
28 **Maudy Thursday**
29 **Good Friday**
31 **Easter Sunday**
National Farm Workers Awareness Day

April-2024

22 **Earth Day**

May-2024

2 **National Day of Prayer**
4 **Bethel University Commencement**
11 **MTS Closing Convocation & Graduation**
19 **Pentecost**
Stott-Wallace Missionary Fund Offering
World Mission Sunday
26 **Memorial Day Offering for Military Chaplains & Personnel for USA churches**

June-2024

16-21 **General Assembly, Evansville, Indiana**
30 **Cumberland Presbyterian Church Ministries Sunday,”** be adopted and amend with the following dates:

July 8, 2023 Program of Alternate Studies Graduation, 1st CP Church, McKenzie, TN (correction)
Sep 15 – Oct 15, 2023 Latino Heritage Month (add)
Feb 14, 2024, Annual Day of Prayer and Fasting (correction)
Mar 10, 2024 Cumberland Youth and Family Services Sunday (add)
May 2024 Asian-Pacific Month (add)

Respectfully submitted,
The Judiciary Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

I. REFERRAL

Referral to this committee is as follows: The Report of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Reverend Mitch Boulton and Reverend Lisa Scott from the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns; Iwao Satoh, translator, Cumberland Presbytery; Elder Commissioner Akimasa Nakano and Reverend Masahiro Matsumoto from Japan Presbytery.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE UNIFIED COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

This committee wishes to express our thanks for the continued work of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns.

Recommendation 1 contains many specific measures on which committee members representative of different communities, circumstances, and perspectives had very different opinions.

In recognition that the CPCA, our sister denomination, feels strongly that these measures are worthy of including in the recommendation, we want to honor the experience and needs of all the communities represented in our two denominations,

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 from the Report of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns, which states:

“WHEREAS, Scripture teaches about the sanctity of life (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 8: 4-5; Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:4-5) and,

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith holds that all forms of life are sacred to God, and Humans are made in God’s own image (COF 1.11) and,

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith teaches that God desires relationship with all persons (COF 3.01) and,

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith teaches that “all life and creation is a trust from God” (COF 6.10) and,

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith calls on believers to change all “circumstances of oppression... by which persons are denied essential dignity God intends for them in the work of creation (COF 6.30) and,

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith calls on believers to be advocates for all victims of violence and to work to change laws that allow for such violence (COF 6.31) and,

WHEREAS, Citizens of the United States of America have the freedom to engage in politics at the local, county/parish, state, and/or federal levels including voting and expressing political opinion,

WHEREAS, violence can deprive its victims of loss (life, physical, spiritual and emotional health, and/or livelihood or property),

WHEREAS, the lives of children and young adults are impacted negatively by firearms that are not secured, resulting in injury and loss of life,

WHEREAS gun violence caused 44,260 deaths in the United States in 2022. Of that number 24,090 of these deaths were determined to be suicide and only 1,262 of those shootings were determined to be defensive,

WHEREAS, the United States has endured over 270 mass shootings already in 2022. Most recently in Uvalde (TX), Buffalo (NY), Tulsa (OK) and Philadelphia (PA) accounting for 38 fatalities (Gun Violence Archive), and WHEREAS, the United States has, since 1999 suffered over 550 separate school shooting incidents with at least 185 fatalities and over 311,000 children exposed to gun violence at school during that time (Washington Post)

Note: These statistics should be updated for presentation by the Commissioner/Delegates if the resolution is adopted. Refer: <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church call upon Congress and the President of the United States to act on reasonable firearm legislation.

These measures include:

- **Mandatory background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows and private sales**
- **The implementation of red flag laws**
- **The extension of waiting periods for all firearm sales**
- **Major investments in mental health and telehealth**
- **Closing the “boyfriend loophole”**
- **The establishment of a minimum age of 21 to purchase a firearm for any individual who is not serving in the Armed Forces (to include reservists, national guard members and Coast Guard members) of the United States of America**
- **The prohibition of further sales of “assault weapons”**
- **The prohibition of high-capacity magazines**
- **Requiring liability insurance for those who manufacture firearms**
- **Requiring firearm owners to carry personal liability insurance**
- **Requiring firearm owners with minors in the home to demonstrate methods of physically securing those firearms from said minors**

This Resolution is to be sent to the following persons upon approval:

- **Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy**
- **House Majority Leader Steve Scalise**
- **House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries**
- **House Majority Whip Tom Emmer**
- **House Minority Whip Katherine Clark**
- **Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer**
- **Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell**
- **Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin**
- **Senate Minority Whip John Thune**
- **President Pro Tempore Patty Murray**
- **Vice President of the United States Kamala Harris**
- **President of the United States Joseph R. Biden,”**

be adopted at the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 from the Report of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns, “that approve a template letter for individuals, churches and/or presbyteries to use in advocating for firearms legislation at the local, county/parish and/or state level,” be denied.

Given that the committee does not have the resources to draft the template referred to in the recommendation, The committee wants to refer the task of drafting a template letter to the Unified Committee,

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the task of approving a template letter for individuals, churches and/or presbyteries to use in advocating for firearms legislation at the local, county/parish and/or state level be referred to the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns.

With the understanding that the CPCA representatives on the Unified Committee indicated a general desire for these recommendations to be adopted,

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 3 from the Report of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns, “that with the adoption of the Resolution on Reasonable Firearms Legislation, the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church asks that the 146th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America adopt the aforementioned resolution,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 4 from the Report of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns, “that the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the 146th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America create a permanent joint task force on violence. Mindful of budgeting constraints and timeline the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns will continue to have a dedicated subcommittee on violence until such time as a joint task force on violence be included as a line item in their respective budgets. Recognizing the need to assist individuals, congregations, and presbyteries in responding to gun violence and its aftermath the UCTSC feels that it is important that the denomination provide resources on safe sanctuaries and to assist with the healing process after gun violence,” be adopted.

Recognizing that violence is an evil that affects every community, and that the church is called to bear witness not only in words but in action to the value of every human life and be emissaries of the Lord’s presence and consolation and advocates for a more safe and just society,

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 5 from the Report of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns, “that the General Assembly encourage Cumberland Presbyterians to make use of the Critical Situation Response Plan for Presbyteries and Church (developed by the Ministry Council) and approved by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church General Assembly in 2020 (Attachment 2). Furthermore, that the General Assembly task the Ministry Council and its Teams with developing a list of resources specifically addressing counseling for post-event trauma, whether that be suicide, domestic violence, or other gun-related violence,” be adopted.

Upon receiving clarification from Japanese commissioners that the line reading “On the issue of U.S. military bases, the imposition of U.S. military bases only on Okinawa is violence by the Japanese government” is meant to indicate violence by the Japanese government against the people of Okinawa by unilaterally restricting U.S. military presence in Japan to Okinawa and no other islands in Japan, leaving the people of Okinawa against their wishes to bear alone and inequitably any risks or costs associated with the presence of such bases, the committee understands this item to be in harmony with the other examples included in the text of the communication,

RECOMMENDATION 7: That Recommendation 6 from the Report of the Unified Committee, “that the 192nd General Assembly affirms the principles stated in this communication/resolution,” be adopted.

Respectfully submitted,
The Committee on Theology and Social Concerns

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY COUNCIL

I. REFERRAL

Referral to this committee was the Report of the Ministry Council.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Mrs. Edith Old, Director of Ministries; Reverend Elinor Brown, Discipleship Ministry Team Leader; Matthew Gore, Communications Ministry Team Leader; Reverend Milton Ortiz, Missions Ministry Team Leader; Reverend Pam Phillips-Burk, Pastoral Development Ministry Team Leader; and Reverend Juan David Correa, Ministry Council Representative.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRAL

A. REPORT OF THE MINISTRY COUNCIL

We commend the Ministry Council for all its hard work and faithfulness to the ministry of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The committee met with the Director of Ministries as well as each Ministry Team Leader to hear an update from each specific ministry team.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “that the 192nd General Assembly encourages all churches to participate in celebrating the Christian Education season (August – September) in their communities and use the theme of “Light the Path!” utilizing CP resources as a way of beginning a new year of Sunday school and other Christian Education ministries,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “that believing that participants will begin to form and continue to nurture a lifetime of relationships, that the 192nd General Assembly encourage all Cumberland Presbyterians to participate in the connectional nature of our denomination by attending and supporting Children’s Fest (July 15, 2023), CPYC (July 2 – 7, 2023), and A Day in the Park (October 10, 2023),” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “that the 192nd General Assembly strongly urges all churches to use Encounter for Sunday school classes or special studies, especially the summer 2023 quarter as it focuses on the Confession of Faith and the Fall 2023 and Summer 2024 quarters as they present perspectives from our CP Churches outside the U.S.,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 4 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “that to better develop leaders and support churches, the 192nd General Assembly encourages presbyteries to pray for, be in support of, and seek opportunities to experience the ENGAGE process in local congregations,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 5 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “that the 192nd General Assembly designate the third Sunday in January as “Call Sunday” in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and include it as an annual observation on the denominational calendar,” be adopted.

This Committee of the Ministry Council for the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church would like to publicly acknowledge the ministry of the Reverend Dr. Lynndon L. Thomas. Lynn is a fourth generation Cumberland Presbyterian minister. He, and his wife Nona, served as missionaries in Columbia, South America, for eleven years. After that, Lynn accepted the call to be our denominational Director of Cross-cultural Ministries. He was the first person to occupy this position that was newly created because of Lynn’s help and previous work. This Call lasted thirteen years during which he traveled approximately one million miles throughout the international boundaries of our denomination carrying the Gospel to many different people groups. He was also helping to establish Cumberland Presbyterian Churches, presbyteries, and other various ministries everywhere he went. Then Lynn served another twelve years as the Global Missions Director for the entire Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Thanks to Reverend Thomas, Cumberland Presbyterians have missionaries working faithfully on every inhabited continent in the world.

We commend Lynn for his thirty-six years of service to the Cumberland Presbyterian Denomination. Many have counted on him for his vast knowledge of missions which he largely gained while working with and in our Global Church. Lynn has helped to not only expand our mission points around the world, but he has also been a great ambassador for the various mission efforts of the Church.

RECOMMENDATION 6: We recommend that this General Assembly stand and give honor and gratitude to the Reverend Dr. Lynn Thomas for a job well done. We will offer a prayer of blessing as he steps into his next call.

Respectfully submitted,
The Ministry Council Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION/CUMBERLAND YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, The Report of the Board of Trustees of Bethel University, and the Board of Trustees of the Cumberland Youth & Family Services.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Courtney Banatoski, President and CEO Cumberland Youth & Family Services and Brian Martin, Chairman of the Board Cumberland Youth & Family Services, and Pete Carter, Board of Trustees Cumberland Youth & Family Services; Dr. Walter Butler, President Bethel University, Linda Ingram and Chet Dickson, Board of Trustees, Bethel University; Rev. Dr. Jody Hill, President, Memphis Theological Seminary (MTS), Rev. Kip Rush, Moderator of Board of Trustees, MTS, Diane Dickson, Board of Trustees, MTS. Rev. Dr. Michael Qualls, Director Cumberland Presbyterian House of Studies and Director Program of Alternate Studies, MTS..

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Upon receiving the report and hearing discussion from representatives from Cumberland Youth and Family Services, the committee commends Brian Martin, Courtney Banatoski, and staff for their continued work in transforming the lives of some of our most vulnerable children. Their work to enrich the lives of children and families in crisis situations deserves our continued prayers and financial support. Last year they served one hundred fifteen (115) unduplicated children. The success of the Supervised Living Program was also noted, offering enrichment services and a safety net for children aging out of the foster care system who need additional time to complete high school and learn additional life skills.

B. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

Upon receiving the report and hearing discussion from representatives from Bethel University, the committee commends the continued efficient hard work of the University, faculty, and staff as Bethel is seated in the top 10% of the oldest Universities in the nation. New degrees and programs in health sciences, a Master of Arts in Coaching, and a sports management program offer exciting growth opportunities. Additionally, eleven hundred (1,100) high school students are in dual enrollment, affording the opportunity to graduate with both a high school diploma and an Associate's Degree. Homecoming is scheduled for October 20-21, 2023, and everyone is invited. Construction of the new chapel on campus is scheduled to be completed by January 2024. The committee commends Dr. Butler's leadership throughout the years at Bethel University.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Bethel University, "that the General Assembly share Bethel University's Mission and ask Presbyteries worldwide to support the university in its prayers, financial offerings and in recommending students," be adopted.

C. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Upon receiving the report and hearing discussion from representatives from Memphis Theological Seminary, the committee commends President Rev. Dr. Jody Hill and Rev. Dr. Michael Qualls, Director of The Cumberland Presbyterian House of Studies and The Program of Alternate Studies for their continued work and leadership at MTS. Fully synchronous, asynchronous, monthly hybrid, and weekly hybrid class options are available, and a complete Masters of Divinity and Masters of Arts in Christian Ministry are available entirely online in 2023. PAS Columbia has proven very successful, and the Pulpit & Pew online faculty lectures provide additional resources to churches, clergy, and lay persons. Of two hundred

and one (201) degree-seeking students, twenty-two (22) Cumberland Presbyterian students are currently enrolled, with nineteen (19) in the M.Div. program and three (3) in the doctoral program. The committee was happy to hear the Board of Trustees at MTS has tabled the idea of exploring a covenant relationship with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, “that the General Assembly express its gratitude to trustee Reverend Anne Hames for her faithful service to Memphis Theological Seminary and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, “that we call on all Cumberland Presbyterians to pray that God will continue to call men and women to the office of ministry, and that they will be well prepared through our educational institutions to lead growing and vibrant congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ to the world,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That the General Assembly express its gratitude to Karen Patten, longstanding assistant to Rev. Dr. Michael Qualls, for her contribution to The Program of Alternate Studies at MTS and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, “that the third Sunday in August, (August 20, 2023 and August 18, 2024) be included in the General Assembly Calendar as Seminary/PAS Sunday, and that the General Assembly encourage all churches to share information about MTS and PAS and receive a special offering on that day, or on a more convenient day of the session’s choosing. MTS leadership has committed to focusing these annual funds on growing the Baird-Buck Endowment for Cumberland Presbyterian Studies until the Chair in CP Studies is fully funded,” be adopted.

Respectfully submitted,
The Committee on Children’s Home/Higher Education

**The
Proceedings
of the**

**ONE HUNDRED NINETY SECOND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

of the

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

session held in

DENTON, TEXAS

June 18 - 23, 2023

At Denton, Texas and within the facilities of the Embassy Suites Hotel, there the nineteenth day of June in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-three, at the appointed hour of two o'clock in the afternoon, Minister and Elder Commissioners from the various presbyteries, youth advisory delegates and visitors assembled.

FIRST DAY – MONDAY – JUNE 19, 2023

The day began with orientation for Commissioners and YAD's at 8:00 a.m. with prayer offered by Moderator Mike Wilkinson (Presbytery of East Tennessee). The Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk, led the orientation. Following his remarks Reverend Sharpe introduced a video on this year's theme, "This Is Our Story," based on Psalm 107:2a. He mentioned that there were photographs with related QR codes of Cumberland Presbyterians who were willing to tell their stories displayed throughout the hallways near Clinton/Kincaid and other meeting rooms. He encouraged Commissioners and guests to visit those displays and access the respective stories.

Once the orientation was concluded, the YAD's were dismissed to meet with Reverend Nathan Wheeler, Youth and Young Adult Ministries. The Chairs and Co-Chairs of the GA Committees met with Engrossing Clerk, Reverend Lisa A. Scott for further orientation.

At 10:00 a.m., June 19, 2023, prior to the start of General Assembly business session, Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk, announced that Commissioners would be taking part in the Denominational Visioning Process. He explained to the Commissioners that the 190th General Assembly tasked the Ministry Council, GA Office, Board of Stewardship and the Historical Foundation and other relevant entities to develop a strategic plan that includes mission statement, vision stated and guiding principles.

A planning team of the entities met with The Leaders' Haven, a strategic planning facilitator/consulting firm to develop "The Proposed Vision of Ministry and Action Strategy." Reverend Sharpe told the Commissioners that they would review the plan and have an opportunity to share their thoughts. Mrs. Edith Olds, Director of Ministries, introduced Cynthia Mills, President and Consultant, The Leaders' Haven, outlining Ms. Mills educational and business accomplishments. Ms. Mills then participated via video conference and gave an overview of the framework, which addresses global impact (ministry), pastoral capacity (ministers), and community integration (ministering). Commissioners submitted their comments via email to the consultant who indicated that a compilation of notes from table discussions would be available at the end of the week.

THE ASSEMBLY IS CONSTITUTED

The Moderator, the Reverend Mike Wilkinson asked that the Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegates be seated in the first four rows of seats with guests taking the seats behind them.

Moderator Wilkinson, called the assembly to order at 2:04 p.m. He made preliminary announcements to the General Assembly, offering words of appreciation and welcome to those present.

WELCOME, PASTOR HOSTS, LOCAL OFFICIALS

The Moderator asked Pastor Host, the Reverend Dusty Luthy, pastor of the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Denton, Texas (Red River Presbyter) and Mr. Brian Martin, General Assembly Host Committee Chairperson, who serves on the Board of Trustees of the Cumberland Youth and Family Services, to come forward to bring greetings to the Assembly. Reverend Luthy and Mr. Martin brought greetings in different languages represented by the General Assembly Commissioners and those present. Mr. Martin invited the participants to visit Cumberland Youth and Family Services tomorrow between 5:00-7:00 p.m. Following the opportunity to tour the campus, commissioners and guests are invited to stay for a barbeque. Mr. Martin expressed thanks to Red River Presbytery for their cooperation and support for the barbeque. Reverend Luthy also expressed her appreciation to those on the cleaning committee.

The Reverend Joe Howard, III, Moderator of Brazos Presbytery, Texas Synod, and pastor of Faith Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, Dallas, Texas, brought greetings to the General Assembly on behalf of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America. He shared remarks on the theme "This Is Our Story," encouraging those present to "Tell the people, that Jesus lives and can change your lives." His remarks were well received by the present.

PARLIAMENTARIAN APPOINTED

The Moderator appointed the parliamentarian, Reverend Dr. Joe Butler (Retiring Vice-Moderator) for today only.

CONSTITUTING PRAYER

The Reverend Don Winn (Presbytery of East Tennessee) gave the constituting prayer.

THE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The motion was made to adopt the agenda.

The Youth Advisory Delegates were asked by the Moderator if they wanted to adopt the agenda. The body voted to adopt the agenda.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The Reverend Gloria Diaz, Trinity Presbytery, presented the Report of the Credentials Committee. There were forty-six (46) ministers, forty-five (45) elders, and seventeen (17) Youth Advisory Delegates making a total of one hundred eight commissioners present at 2:00 p.m. The Moderator asked the Youth Advisory Delegates whether they wanted to receive report and concur in the report. They were in favor of receiving the report. On motion the report was concurred in, marked appendix "A", and filed.

ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR

Moderator Wilkinson opened the floor to nominations. He declared the floor open for nominations for the office of Moderator of the one hundred ninety-second General Assembly. Elder Randy Seaton (Cornerstone Presbytery) nominated the Reverend Mitch Boulton (Cornerstone Presbytery) who was previously endorsed by his presbytery. Reverend Wes Johnson (Red River Presbytery) nominated the Reverend Judy Madden (Red River Presbytery). There were no nominations from the floor.

Youth Advisory Delegates were in favor of placing the names of the Reverend Mitch Boulton and Reverend Judy Madden into nomination. The body voted to place their names into nomination.

Moderator Wilkinson asked that Reverend Boulton and Reverend Madden stand so that Commissioners could put a face to a name before the vote.

Reverend Daniel Barkley from Grace Presbytery spoke in favor of Reverend Bolton's nomination.

The Moderator invited Reverend Rick Owen, senior pastor, Pathway Church, Burleson, Texas, Red River Presbytery, to the podium, where he spoke in favor of Reverend Madden's nomination.

The Moderator invited Reverend Mitch Boulton to come forward to make remarks. He expressed thanks for the opportunity to serve the Church, counting it an honor.

The Moderator invited Reverend Judy Madden to come forward to make remarks. She expressed thanks for the opportunity to serve the Church, counting it an honor.

Moderator Wilkinson asked the body if they might proceed to a vote. Reverend Wilkinson asked the Youth Advisory Delegates their opinion and they were in favor of the motion. The body voted to close nominations and proceeded with the election by written ballot. The Credentials Committee collected the ballots and counted them.

While the ballots were being counted, the Moderator invited Reverend Sheila O'Mara, a representative of the Commission on Federal Chaplaincies to come forward. She then introduced Chaplain Dennis Hysom (Colonel, USA, Retired), the new Executive Director of the Federal Chaplaincies Board, our endorsing agent for all Federal chaplains. She presented Chaplain Hysom with a newly minted Cumberland Presbyterian Challenge Coin, recently developed by the Pastoral Development Ministry Team. Director Hysom spoke of the necessity of our chaplains bringing hope to those in the military, in Veteran's Affairs medical facilities and in federal prisons.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Stated Clerk announced there are no communications. The Moderator acknowledged the gracious and generous gift of audio/visual/production equipment provided to the General Assembly by an anonymous donor.

CORRECTIONS TO PRELIMINARY MINUTES

Updated preliminary minutes were provided to the Commissioners prior to the start of business. It was noted that there are no additional updates.

INTRODUCTION OF BOARD/AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

The Moderator recognized board/agency representatives present, asking them to stand. As he announced the name of the committees, he asked the representatives to stand.

Bethel University	Walter Butler/Wayne Scott
Commission on Federal Chaplains	Sheila O'Mara/Dennis Hyman
Children's Home	Courtney Banatoski/Brian Martin
Historical Foundation	Susan Gore/Lisa Oliver
Judiciary	Geoff Knight/Mike Wilkinson/Mike Sharpe
Memphis Theological Seminary	Jody Hill/Kip Rush
Ministry Council	Edith Old/David Correa
Our United Outreach	Cliff Hudson/Jeff McMichael/Mikel Davis
Stewardship/Elected Officers	Robert Heflin/Randy Davidson
Theology and Social Concerns	Mitch Boulton/Lisa Scott (alternate)

RESULTS OF MODERATOR VOTES

The Moderator asked for the results of the Moderator's vote. Reverend Gloria Diaz, Chair, Credentials Committee, Trinity Presbytery, reported the results of the Election of the Moderator. Sixty-two (62) votes were cast for the Reverend Mitch Boulton and twenty-six (26) votes were cast for the Reverend Judy Madden. Moderator Wilkinson declared the Reverend Mitch Boulton Moderator of the one hundred ninety-second General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

ELECTION OF THE VICE MODERATOR

Moderator Wilkinson opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Moderator of the one hundred ninety-second General Assembly. Reverend Daniel Barkley (Grace Presbytery) nominated Reverend Judy Madden, Red River Presbytery, for Vice-Moderator. Moderator Wilkinson asked the Youth Advisory Delegates if nominations should be closed. They were in favor of that action. The body voted to close nominations and Moderator Wilkinson entertained a motion to elect Reverend Madden by acclamation.

Motion was made and seconded. By acclamation the Reverend Judy Madden was elected Vice-Moderator of the 192nd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AND REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

Moderator Wilkinson spoke to the General Assembly about the process used by the Joint Committee on Amendments, specifically related to the referral from the 191st General Assembly “Memorial from Arkansas Presbytery,” to the Joint Committee on Amendments. He stated that the report from the Joint Committee on Amendments had been referred to the appropriate General Assembly committee (Judiciary) and that there would be no votes today.

Reverend Byron Forester (Mid-South Presbytery) presented a resolution entitled, “A Resolution Concerning Memorials to the 192nd General Assembly Seeking to Bar Members of the LGBTQ+ Community from Answering God’s Call to Service and Ministry in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.”

Reverend Corey Cummings (Cornerstone Presbytery) presented a resolution related to the work of the Joint Committee on Amendments on the referral from the 191st General Assembly “Memorial from Arkansas Presbytery Regarding Marriage.” A motion was made to set aside the General Assembly Standing Rule Number 4 for this resolution to be voted upon by the Commissioners rather than be referred to committee. Of those voting, fifty-five (55) voted in favor, fourteen (14) voted against. The discussion of the resolution is slated to take place during the General Assembly business meeting at 8:00 a.m., June 20, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:05 p.m. recess was declared by Moderator Wilkinson until 8:00 a.m. Tuesday Morning, June 20, 2023, Commissioners were invited to attend the Moderator and CPWM President reception. Commissioners were advised to meet with their respective committees at 4:30 p.m.

RECEPTION

Following the business meeting, a “Come and Go” reception to honor the newly elected Moderator, Vice Moderator and Cumberland Presbyterian Women’s Ministry Officers was held in Eagle I. Those in attendance were the newly elected Moderator, Reverend Mitch Boulton and his wife Rhonda Boulton; the newly elected Vice-Moderator, the Reverend Judy Maddens and her husband, David Madden; Mrs. Veronica Ent, the past President of the Cumberland Presbyterian Women’s Ministry; and Mrs. Debbie Beals, (Trilla, Illinois) newly elected President of the Cumberland Presbyterian Women’s Ministry, along with her husband, Tim Beals. Refreshments were provided to those in attendance.

THE EVENING PROGRAM

The General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Convention of Cumberland Presbyterian Women’s Ministry and visitors met at 7:00 p.m. at the Embassy Suite Hotel for a Worship/Communion Service under the direction of General Assembly Worship Director Reverend Judy Madden (Red River Presbytery), who served as Worship Leader. She led the call to worship (The Music Director was Mr. Andrew Dolan, Music Director at Pathway Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Red River Presbytery. Mrs. Joanna Wilkinson (Knoxville First Cumberland Presbyterian Church) was the soloist. The Pathway Cumberland Presbyterian Church Worship Band provided music.

Following the prelude, “My Testimony,” Reverend Madden read the Scripture, Psalm 107:2, following with the Call to Worship and opening prayer. Congregational songs included: “My Testimony,” “What Mercy Did for Me,” and “Oh, Come to the Altar.” Mrs. Wilkinson sang “At This Table” during the Communion Service.

Reverend Mike Wilkinson, Retiring Moderator (Presbytery of East Tennessee) and Mrs. Veronica Ent, Cumberland Presbyterian Women President, read the Memorial Roll of the Ministers and Elders who have died during 2022 and early 2023. Reverend Wilkinson led the “Apostle’s Creed” as the Affirmation of Faith. Mrs. Ent read Scripture, John 8:6. Reverend Wilkinson brought the sermon, “Grace Happens Here.”

INSTALLATION OF MODERATOR AND VICE-MODERATOR

Reverend Wilkinson officiated the installation of Moderator Mitch Boulton and Vice-Moderator Judy Maddens. He first invited the Reverend Mike Sharpe, Stated Clerk, and Retiring Vice-Moderator the Reverend Joe Butler to assist in the installation service. He outlined the duties and responsibilities of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, and then asked them if they would be willing to accept those duties and responsibilities. Each answered in the affirmative. Moderator Wilkinson then asked the General Assembly Commissioners if they would accept Reverend Boulton as Moderator and Reverend Madden as Vice-Moderator. Those present in the congregation answered with an affirmative, “We do.” Retiring Moderator Wilkinson placed the Moderator cross on Reverend Boulton. The installation service closed with the new Moderator and Vice-Moderator kneeling to receive a blessing and charge from Reverend Butler.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Sacrament of Holy Communion was served by Co-Celebrants Reverend Wilkinson and Reverend Madden. The following elders took part in the Communion Service: JoAnn Shugert (Red River Presbytery), Sue Cook (Nashville Presbytery), and Guillermo Arguello (Cauca Valley Presbytery). Ministers taking part in the Communion Service included: Reverend Nathan Scott (Choctaw Presbytery), Reverend Sheila O’Mara (Presbytery of del Cristo), Reverend Masahiro Matsumoto (Japan Presbytery), Reverend Joyce Merritt (Murfreesboro Presbytery), Reverend Fredy Diaz (Trinity Presbytery), Reverend Gloria Diaz (Trinity Presbytery) and Reverend Leslie Johnson (Red River Presbytery). Ushers for the evening service were Gayle Kammerer and Maxine Sweeney (Marlow Church) and Randy Davidson and Becky Wiklerson (Covenant Church).

Reverend Madden gave the benediction.

CPYC 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Cumberland Presbyterian Youth Conference (CPYC) 100th Anniversary Celebration took place in Eagles I. The event was hosted by the Discipleship Ministry Team. Reverend Nathan Wheeler, Youth and Young Adults Ministry served as the host. Reverend Wheeler spoke briefly about the photographs, documents, and memorabilia on display throughout the room. He commented that the “Through the Decades” display was the genesis for a soon to be available book on CPYC, written by Reverend Dusty Luthy (Red River Presbytery). There was a video of the 2022 CPYC experience at Bethel University. He added that there is an alumni group for CPYC with an upcoming meeting on July 7-8, 2023, at Bethel University. In addition to information promoting CPYC, the event offered Commissioners and guests CPYC keepsakes, prizes, activities led by the Youth Advisory Delegates, and refreshments.

SECOND DAY – TUESDAY – JUNE 20, 2023

The General Assembly began its day with a business meeting in Clinton/Kincaid. Moderator Boulton called the meeting back into session at 8:00 a.m. The General Assembly began its day with devotions in respective committees. Forty-six (46) ministers, forty-four (44) elders and seventeen (17) Youth Advisory Delegates were in attendance.

He asked that Reverend Marc Bell (Covenant Presbytery) to give the opening prayer. Moderator Boulton gave instructions to the Commissioners: to move closer to the podium and to turn in daily registration cards.

Moderator Boulton opened the floor to discussion on the resolution presented by Reverend Corey Cummings. Reverend Cummings made an editorial change, deleting the paragraph that begins, “Be it furthered resolved that Standing Rule #4...” since the General Assembly set aside the standing rule in its action on June 19, 2023. There was further discussion that provided clarification on paragraph 11.04 Joint Committee on Amendments, General Assembly By-Laws.

Following discussion Moderator Boulton asked the Youth Advisory Delegates their opinion. YADs were polled and in favor of adopting the resolution. The Moderator asked the Commissioners to vote on the resolution. The General Assembly adopted the resolution.

The Moderator announced that copies of “A Resolution Concerning Memorials to the 192nd General Assembly Seeking to Bar Members of the LGBTQ+ Community from Answering God’s Call to Service and Ministry in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” which was presented on June 19, 2023, would be distributed to the Commissioners. Three additional resolutions were also distributed to the Commissioners:

“A Resolution Calling for a Period of Prayer, Dialogue, Respectful Engagement, and Discernment of God’s Will for God’s Church,” was submitted by Reverend Joyce Merritt (Murfreesboro Presbytery). “Reaffirmation of Authority of Session and Presbytery to Ordain,” was submitted by Elder Matthew McDonnell (Del Cristo Presbytery). “Resolution: Adoption of LGBTQ+ Solidarity Sunday,” was submitted by Reverend Earl Goodwin (Robert Donnell Presbytery). The four remaining resolutions, not voted on today, were referred to the Judiciary Committee.

At 8:20 the Moderator dismissed the Commissioners to their respective committees and announced that business would resume on Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m.

THE MORNING PROGRAM

The Board of Stewardship sponsored a “Health Fair,” in Clinton/Kincaid. Public health workers from the Denton County Board of Public Health were available with literature, promotional items and free blood checks for those attending General Assembly.

THE AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Our United Outreach (OUO) hosted a “Lunch and Learn” in Eagle I. The Reverend Jeff McMichael, Coordinator for OUO, served as master of ceremonies. In his opening comments he announced the purpose of the luncheon: to educate, promote, and to encourage those in attendance “to be part of something bigger than themselves.” He explained that OUO is the principal funding stream through which the Denomination meets its mission and program needs. He shared the new vision statement for the OUO Committee, “Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ Together.” The key component in realizing that vision means engaging more individuals in talking about OUO at presbytery meetings. He took a moment to let those in attendance know that they, too, could answer God’s call to become an OUO Ambassador. Literature and sign-up sheets were provided at each table for that purpose.

Reverend McMichael then invited the Reverend Cliff Hudson, Development Director, OUO to discuss how the OUO staffing model was being restructured. Rather than having a fulltime Development Director and less than full-time Regional Representatives, OUO is being restructured to have a less-than fulltime OUO Coordinator complemented by Volunteer OUO Ambassadors in each presbytery. The Volunteers will receive training, using a training resource developed by Reverend Hudson and Reverend McMichael. At the end of this General Assembly Reverend McMichael will take over duties as Interim Coordinator of OUO, Reverend Hudson will become a Volunteer OUO Ambassador.

Reverend McMichael asked Elder Mikel Davis, Chairperson of the OUO Committee, to speak about OUO Funding. Elder Davis emphasized that each individual Cumberland Presbyterian needs to be invested in Our church and that any dollar amount is helpful. He reported that in the most recent year OUO met 98% of its budget. This announcement was celebrated by those in attendance; however, Elder Davis then challenged his listeners that if each of our churches were to tithe OUO, then the annual budget for OUO would double, creating more opportunities for ministry.

Reverend McMichael concluded the program by summarizing the needs of OUO: first, to reach its \$2.5 million budget; second, to help churches understand that they can and should be giving to OUO; third, to increase the number of individuals who give to OUO; and finally, to expand the contact list so that OUO effectively tells the story of how the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is impacting the world for God’s glory.

THE EVENING PROGRAM

Cumberland Youth and Family Services hosted campus tours for the Commissioners and guests from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Following the campus tour, Cumberland Youth and Family Services provided a Texas barbeque to those in attendance. The event also included fellowship and storytelling. Commissioners and guests were appreciative of the opportunity to visit the campus and for the gracious hospitality.

THIRD DAY – WEDNESDAY – JUNE 21, 2023

The General Assembly began its day with devotions in respective committees. Forty-five (45) ministers, forty-four (44) elders and eighteen (18) Youth Advisory Delegates were in attendance in committees.