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JUDICIARY (to be distributed separately)	

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BETHEL/CUMBERLAND YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

I. REFERRALS

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

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Courtney Banatoski, Director of Cumberland Youth & Family Services; Jennifer Jenkins, Senior Director of Development (CYFS); Brian Martin, Board Chair (CYFS); Dr. Perry Moulds, Bethel University, President, and Nancy Bean, Board Chair, Bethel University.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. THE REPORT OF THE CUMBERLAND YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Upon receiving the report and hearing discussion from the representatives of Cumberland Youth and Family Services, the committee commends the work, support, and care of the lives of children and families. The committee wishes to highlight these incredible things that have happened. Twenty children have been placed in adoptive homes in less than two years. Support provided to 18-22 year-olds who have aged out of the foster care program in the supervised independent living program, keeping these at-risk young people safe, providing support so they can become successful and independent. They have gone from sixteen children on campus daily to sixty-five residents. They hope to expand services into rural counties beyond the current service area. The committee wishes to express great appreciation to Brian Martin and Guin Tyus for their service on the Board of Trustees for nine years. We appreciate their dedication and commitment.

August 22, 2027 marks the 123 years of service of Cumberland Youth and Family Services. In the past, Children's Home Sunday has been included in the denominational calendar on the third Sunday in August. It is not currently included on the calendar as published in the Report of the Stated Clerk. At the request of Cumberland Youth and Family Services, the committee would like it reinstated.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the denomination designate August 22, 2027, as Cumberland Youth and Family Services Sunday and add it to the denominational calendar.

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

Upon receiving the report and hearing discussion from the representatives of Bethel University, the committee commends the professionalism and dedication to higher education provided by Bethel University. The committee wishes to recognize these accomplishments: NAIA Champions of Character 5 Star Institution Award, 41 countries are represented in the student body, applications are up by 60% and new enrollments are up 50%, acceptance rate is 90%, 42 degrees are offered. They recently adopted a strategic plan named Vision 2030.

RECOMMENDATION 2: 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.

As the committee adjourned, a special prayer was offered for the ministries of Cumberland Youth and Family Services and Bethel University.

Respectfully submitted,
Bethel/Cumberland Youth & Family Services Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS/HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee were 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 the committee were: Chaplain Dennis Hysom, Director, Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies; Dr. Tommy Craig, representative, General Assembly Commission on Federal Chaplaincies; Mrs. Susan Knight Gore, Archivist, Historical Foundation; and Mrs. Cathy Littlefield, Historical Foundation Board Representative: .

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON FEDERAL CHAPLAINS

The committee appreciated the opportunity to speak with Chaplain Hysom and Dr. Tommy Craig about the important work of Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies. This group is the organization that consolidates the endorsement of Presbyterian chaplains. It includes Presbyterian USA, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, and the Korean Presbyterian Church abroad.

Chaplain Hysom discussed his primary role as director is to ensure the endorsement of those working as Chaplains in Federal programs, whether that be in the Military, VA Hospitals, or Federal Prison Systems. He also provides pastoral care for those chaplains, including providing annual chaplain training and credentialing events. Chaplain Hysom discussed his budget, between \$185,000-200,000 annually. Approximately half comes from denominational donations, such as our annual Memorial Day offering. With such offerings, chaplains and their families are provided support for their annual training.

The committee appreciates the work of the Presbyterian Federal chaplaincies. the work they offer the many federal chaplaincy men and women in all their situations is greatly needed and they have our deepest gratitude. We give thanks to the ministers that serve in all of their different capacities within the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

The report was received and the Committee makes the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Commission on Federal Chaplains, “That each USA Cumberland Presbyterian Church be encouraged to continue providing 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 includes the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church can only make recommendations for itself, not another denomination.

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 in the United States 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 denied.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Presbyteries of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, in the United States, encourage their churches and members to designate special days throughout the year to engage in prayer to hold up the chaplains and their families in the service to which they have been endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Commission on Federal Chaplains, “That Presbyteries and congregations be encouraged to make special efforts to communicate with those members serving as chaplains from their presbytery or congregation,” be adopted.

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

The Report of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation was received and concurred in. There were no recommendations.

The Committee was privileged to hear from the Archivist Susan Knight Gore and Mrs. Cathy Littlefield, Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation representative. Mrs. Gore highlighted the ongoing efforts to scan and digitize records of churches and presbyteries as well as publications of the denomination.

She discussed in depth the acquisitions they would like to have; these items include ministers' sermons, church service bulletins, commemorative items, session records, etc. Items can be brought to presbytery, emailed or brought to the archives.

The 194th General Assembly did have a recommendation for the Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation to prepare a Succession and Transition Plan for the position of the Archivist, and report back to the 195th General Assembly. Included in their report was the completion of that plan by the Board of Trustees. Due to the security and confidentiality of the data, supporting documents were excluded from the report.

Mrs. Gore and the staff are also working diligently with the Librarian of Memphis Theological Seminary to ensure that appropriate materials are being preserved. They have already collected over eighty boxes of books and rare collections, such as thesis papers, DMin projects, etc. that are one of a kind items. They will continue to go through the items virtually one by one to ensure pieces pertinent to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church will be preserved. The continued work to preserve our history as Cumberland Presbyterians, both past and present, is of utmost importance. The committee commends the continued work of Mrs. Gore and the Historical Foundation.

Respectfully submitted,
The Chaplains/Historical Foundation Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STEWARDSHIP/OUR UNITED OUTREACH/ELECTED OFFICERS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of The Moderator, The Report of The Stated Clerk, The Report of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits; The Report of the Our United Outreach Committee; The Report of The Place of Meeting Committee, and the 2025-2026 Line Item Budgets Submitted by General Assembly Boards/Entities'

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Reverend Jeff McMichael, Our United Outreach Development Director and representative, Elder Mikel Davis (Our United Outreach Committee); Reverend Robert Heflin, Executive Secretary, Reverend Dr. Brittany Meeks, Administrative Assistant and Coordinator of Benefits (Board of Stewardship, Foundation & Benefits), Moderator Jhony Montaña and Stated Clerk, Mike Sharpe.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. THE REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

The committee met with Reverend Jhony Montaña and concurred in the report. The committee expressed our gratitude for his work and his message to all of us. The committee noted his three fundamental convictions that God continues to speak to us, to move forward because Christ is our goal, and to move forward because the mission is not yet finished. Prayer was offered over him and his ministry by the committee.

B. THE REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

The committee met with the Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk and concurred in the report and adopted its recommendations. The committee recognizes the contributions of Elizabeth Vaughn, assistant to the stated clerk and Reverend Lisa Scott, engrossing clerk. The Constitutional Amendments referred to the 194th General Assembly were ratified by the necessary three-fourths vote of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America. The committee would like to thank Mike for his continuing work in the denomination.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, "That each presbytery remind churches of the importance of submitting annual reports and to work with churches that might need assistance in completing the report. Congregations that do not submit an annual report for three consecutive years, will have a zero reported in the Active Membership column of the Yearbook," be adopted

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, "That the 195th General Assembly approve the following dates for the 2026-2027 Church Calendar:

CHURCH CALENDAR 2026-2027

July-2026

5-10	CPYC at Bethel University
6	Summer Session - 2nd term begins Bethel University
10	Program of Alternate Studies Graduation
10-24	PAS Summer Extension School, Bethel University

August-2026

1-Sept 30	Christian Education Season
17	PAS Sunday

September-2026

13	Senior Adult Sunday
20	Christian Service Recognition Sunday

October-2026

Church Paper Month
Clergy Appreciation Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
 4 **Worldwide Communion Sunday**
 11 **Pastor Appreciation Sunday**
 25 **Native American Sunday**

November-2026

Any Sunday Loaves and Fishes Program
 1 **All Saints Day**
 22 **Bible Sunday**
Christ the King Sunday
 29-Dec 24 **Advent in Church and Home**

December-2026

Any Sunday Gift to the King Offering
 1 **Day of Prayer for People with Aids and Other Life-Threatening Illnesses**
 24 **Christmas Eve**
 25 **Christmas Day**

January-2027

6 **Epiphany**
 11 **Human Trafficking Awareness Day**
 12 **Bethel Classes Begin**
 11-12 **Stated Clerks' Conference**
 15 **Deadline for receipt of 2026 Our United Outreach Contributions**

February-2027

Black History Month
 1 **Annual congregational reports due in General Assembly office**
 4 **Denomination Day**
 7 **Historical Foundation Offering**
 14 **Our United Outreach Sunday**
 10-Mar 28 **Ash Wednesday**
Lent to Easter

March-2027

Women's History Month (USA)
 5 **World Day of Prayer (CWU)**
 21 **Palm/Passion Sunday**
 25 **Maundy Thursday**
 26 **Good Friday**
 28 **Easter Sunday**
 31 **National Farm Workers Day**

April-2027

22 **Earth Day**

May-2027

6 **National Day of Prayer**
 9 **Bethel University Commencement**
 16 **Pentecost**
 30 **World Mission Sunday**
Memorial Day Offering for Military Chaplains & Personnel for USA churches
Stott-Wallace Missionary Fund Offering

June-2027

20-25 **General Assembly meets in Lexington, Kentucky," be adopted.**

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

The committee met with Reverend Robert Heflin, Reverend Gary Tubb and Reverend Dr. Brittany Meeks and concurred in the report and adopted its recommendations. The committee noted the emphasis to encourage churches to support their ministers and encourage retirement planning. The committee thanks Robert, Gary and Brittany for their continued work for the denomination.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits, “That all congregations encourage and support their ministers and church staff to establish a retirement account,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits, “That all presbyteries determine if a retired pastor or spouse could benefit from the Cumberland Presbyterian Ministerial Aid Program and work with the Board staff in assisting qualified people to enroll in the program”, be adopted.

D. THE REPORT OF THE OUR UNITED OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The committee met with Reverend Jeff McMichael and Elder Mikel Davis and concurred in the report and recommends adopting its recommendations. The committee thanks Mikel for his nine years of service on the board and discussed the future vision for OUO. The committee recognizes the need to encourage churches and individuals to increase participation in OUO. The committee thanks the committee for its continued hard work.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Our United Outreach Committee, “That General Assembly adopt the following Our United Outreach goal and allocations for 2027:

Amount to be Allocated	2,400,000.00	
Ministry Council	\$1,155,816	48.159%
Bethel University	115,584	4.816%
Cumberland Youth & Family Services	69,360	2.890%
Stewardship	232,656	9.694%
General Assembly Office	184,920	7.705%
*Memphis Theological Seminary/Program of Alternate Studies	161,808	6.742%
Historical Foundation	69,360	2.890%
Shared Services	275,880	11.496%
Contingency	11,568	0.482%
OUO Committee	88,368	3.682%
Comm. On Chaplains	13,440	0.560%
Judiciary Committee	12,672	0.528%
Theology/Social Concern	4,704	0.196%
Nominating Committee	3,864	0.161%
Our United Outreach Goal	\$2,400,000	100.000%

***We anticipate that after the July 31, 2026, closing of Memphis Theological Seminary, the Board of Theological Education or a similar body will continue to work to ensure Cumberland Presbyterian candidates for the ministry receive needed educational support. For that reason, we recommend the MTS/ PAS allotment of OUO be redesignated “Theological Education/Program of Alternate Studies.”, be adopted.**

E. THE REPORT OF THE PLACE OF MEETING COMMITTEE

The committee reviewed the report and confirmed by the Stated Clerk that next year’s General Assembly will be held June 20-25 in Lexington, Kentucky, hosted by Cumberland Presbytery. The Office of the General Assembly welcomes invitations and would gladly provide information on hosting responsibilities. We concur in the report.

F. 2026-2027 LINE ITEM BUDGETS SUBMITTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ENTITIES

We reviewed the 2026-2027 line-item budgets submitted by General Assembly entities and we concur in the report.

Respectfully submitted,
The Stewardship/OUO/Elected Officers Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY COUNCIL/THEOLOGY & SOCIAL CONCERNS

I. REFERRAL

Referral to this committee was the Report of the Ministry Council and The Report of the Unified Theology and Social Concerns.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before the Committee were: Mrs. Edith Old, Director of Ministries of the CPC Ministry Council, along with members of the Ministry Council: Matthew Gore (Interim Communications Ministry Team Leader), Reverend Dr. Milton Ortiz (Missions Ministry Team Leader), Reverend Dr. Pam Phillips-Burk, (Pastoral Development Ministry Team Leader), Reverend Kevin Jenkins (representative to General Assembly); and Reverend Lisa Scott and Reverend Nick Chambers (representatives Unified Committee on Theology & Social Concerns (UCTSC)).

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 the Ministry Council as well as the 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 General Assembly form a new synod named Synod of the Nations, consisting of the following presbyteries: Andes, Emaús, and Cauca Valley,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “That General Assembly appoint a special committee consisting of: Rev. Dr. Milton L. Ortiz and Rev. TJ Malinoski (Missions Ministry Team), Rev. Alexander Castano and Santiago Velasquez (Emaus Presbytery), Rev. Rodrigo Torres, Rev. Fabian Florez, Ms. Janeth Naranjo, Ms. Leticia Ceballos, Rev. Jhony Montano, Rev. Mabely Minolta, Mr. Guillermo Arguello, YAD Ana Isabel Montano (Cauca Valley Presbytery), Rev. Diana Valdez, Ms. Andrea Mesa (Andes Presbytery), and Ms. Francia Ortiz (Cornerstone) to oversee the convening and coordination of the inaugural annual meeting of the new Synod of the Nations on July 10, 2026 at the Armenia CP Church, the implementation of the Standing Rules, the formation of the Coordinating Committee, and the election of officers. A member of the Special Committee will be responsible for convening the organizational meeting of the new synod and presiding until a moderator has been elected,” be denied.

Because of several name and date changes, the committee recommends that recommendation 2 of the ministry council be denied, and the following be approved,

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the General Assembly appoint a special committee consisting of: Rev. Dr. Milton L. Ortiz and Rev. TJ Malinoski (Missions Ministry Team), Rev. Kim Moore (Nashville Presbytery), Rev. Cecilia Taborda and Santiago Velasquez (Emaus Presbytery), Rev. Jhony Montañó, Rev. Mabely Micolta, Angelica Poveda, Nelly Riascos, Leticia Ceballos, and Janneth Naranjo (Cauca Valley Presbytery), Rev. Diana Valdez, Andrea Mesa (Andes Presbytery) to oversee the convening and coordination of the inaugural annual meeting of the new Synod of the Nations on July 11, 2026 at the Armenia CP Church, the implementation of the Standing Rules, the formation of the Coordinating Committee, and the election of officers. A member of the Special Committee will be responsible for convening the organizational meeting of the new synod and presiding until a moderator has been elected.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “That presbyteries comprising Mission Synod be adjusted to reflect the removal of Andes, Emaús, and Cauca Valley presbyteries,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Rev. Dr. Milton Ortiz be allowed to share with this General Assembly the organization prayer for the formation of the “Synod of the Nations.”

Due to legal considerations concerning the corporation and state charter:

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 4 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “That in tandem with the General Assembly approval of the creation of the new synod, that changes be made to the by-laws of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church Ministry Council reflecting two elected members from each of the six synods.

- 1. The size of the council be changed from 15 members to 12 members.**
- 2. The limits on the number of clergy and lay members be changed to no more than 7 members of any one class.**
- 3. The limit on gender be changed to no more than 7 members of any one gender,” be denied.**

RECOMMENDATION 7: That in tandem with the General Assembly approval of the creation of the new synod, the General Assembly receive as information that the Ministry Council intends to recommend to the 196th General Assembly, for its approval, changes to the charter and by-laws of the Ministry Council reflecting the following:

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

Also due to the legal considerations stemming from Recommendation 6:

RECOMMENDATION 8: That Recommendation 5 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “That current members of the council will continue to serve until their current terms expire and will be eligible for re-election based on the new structure of the council,” be denied.

The committee thanks the members of the Ministry Council for their diligent work for Christ and His Kingdom.

B. REPORT OF THE UNIFIED COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGY & SOCIAL CONCERNS

The committee thanks the members of the commission for their diligent work for Christ and His Kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,
The Ministry Council/Theology & Social Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MTS/SPECIAL MTS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary and The Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Reverend Dr. Jody Hill, President of Memphis Theological Seminary; Reverend Kip Rush, Chair, Memphis Theological Seminary Board of Trustees; Reverend Dr. Michael Qualls, Vice President of Cumberland Presbyterian Church Relations and Director of the Cumberland Presbyterian House of Studies and the Program of Alternate Studies; Reverend Dr. Larry Blakeburn, Chair, General Assembly Special Committee on Memphis Theological Seminary; Reverend Bobby Coleman, Member, General Assembly Special Committee on Memphis Theological Seminary; Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk, Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Mr. Jaime Jordan, Legal Counsel Office of General Assembly Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

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

President Jody Hill explained the process preceding the decision to close and the actions of the board since. Because of the timing of the closure, the board was able to offer faculty and staff generous severance packages to aid in the transition. After July 31, 2026, five staff members will remain until December 31, 2026 to help with transition activities including President Hill, Vice President Qualls, some office and security personnel. Your committee commends Reverend Dr. Jody Hill, President of Memphis Theological Seminary, and Reverend Kip Rush, Chairman of the Memphis Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, for their compassion and pastoral care of the students, staff, and faculty as the Seminary begins the process of closing. Students can finish their degree journeys with a generous teach-out program offered by Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. A celebration of the sixty-plus years of ministry by the Seminary will be held on July 2, 2026. The report contained no recommendations.

B. THE REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MTS AND CLERGY/LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Persons of counsel provided background information for the recommendations and answered many questions for us. Your committee wishes to commend the Special Committee for its work as the General Assembly creates a new process of educating Cumberland Presbyterian ministers to serve God.

1. Board Of Theological Education and Lay Ministry

The Special Committee developed a vision, mission, and strategic framework as a guiding statement for theological education and lay ministry for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. This framework can be found in Appendix 1. To begin this ministry, our committee makes the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, "That the 195th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church approve the creation of the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church using the Vision, Mission and Strategic Framework (Appendix 1) as the basis for the formation of this Board," be adopted.

Recommendation 2 is necessary to change the name of Memphis Theological Seminary to the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry for legal purposes related to the corporation's Tennessee charter and federal tax status. The proposed charter is in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly consent to the Amended and Restated Charter approved by the board of trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary on May 15, 2026, in order for the MTS corporation to continue its existence as the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry* of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (BTE) and to carry on the ministry of theological education and lay leadership training in accordance with the Vision, Mission and Strategic Framework. (Appendix 2),” be adopted.

2. Board Structure and Criteria

Your committee believes that the members of the board must possess certain knowledge, skills, and commitment to develop this new education program. These criteria are vital to success and are defined in Appendix 3. Your committee makes the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly adopt the “Criteria for the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry” (Appendix 3) in the election of members of the board and recommend to the Committee on Nominations that it consider these criteria as guidance when nominating candidates for the BTE board of trustees,” be adopted.

Your committee understands the challenges of transition from an education system based in and overseen by the Seminary to a newly created program of study overseen by new board members whose qualifications are vital to success. Recognizing the need for board members with certain qualifications and the need for someone to call the first meeting, the following is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 4 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly:

- **Thank the current members of the MTS board of trustees for their diligent service to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church during a difficult time in the life of the denomination;**
- **Reconstitute the board of trustees of the MTS/BTE corporation by removing the current trustees effective August 1, 2026, and**
- **Elect the following (12) persons to serve as the board of trustees of the MTS/BTE corporation, with the terms of office indicated below to establish an annual rotation of one-third of the board, and with these elected trustees taking office immediately after the current MTS trustees cease to serve.**

Elected to a term of one year expiring 2027:

- 1. Rev. Dr. Tom Campbell (ETNP)**
- 2. Dr. Maurice Ottinger (Robert Donnell) tri-convenor***
- 3. Rev. Dr. Barry Anderson (Robert Donnell)**
- 4. Kathy Wood Dobbins (Nashville)**

Elected to a term of two years expiring 2028:

- 5. Rev. Michele Gentry (Andes*)**
- 6. Rev. Bobby Coleman (Arkansas) tri-convenor***
- 7. Rev. Dr. Marcus Hayes (Red River)**
- 8. Dr. Amanda Batts (Cornerstone)**

Elected to a term of three years expiring 2029:

- 9. Kiara* Castleman (Mid-South) tri-convenor**
- 10. Rev. Mark Hester (ETNP)**
- 11. Frazier* Allen (Nashville*)**
- 12. Rev. Glen Watts (Cornerstone)**

3. Funding For The BTE

The BTE will need adequate funding to fulfill its mission. Current OUO funding for MTS and PAS plus income generated by the endowments that permit spending for operations and the net proceeds from the sale of MTS property should provide sufficient funds. Your committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 5 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly continue to fund MTS/BTE and PAS through OUO,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 6 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly authorize the Special Committee created by the 194th General Assembly to continue its work as contemplated by the actions of the General Assembly in its called meeting held January 23, 2026, in Brentwood, Tennessee,” be adopted.

4. Amendments To General Assembly Bylaws

Changes to General Assembly Bylaws are needed with the closure of Memphis Theological Seminary and the creation of the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That Recommendation 7 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly amend its Bylaws by substituting the words “Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry” in place of the words “Memphis Theological Seminary” each time those words appear in the Bylaws,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That Recommendation 8 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly amend Bylaw 10.06 to read as follows: 10.06 Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry. The corporation shall elect twelve (12) directors to the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry. The corporation shall elect the directors in such a manner that, immediately following any election, at least six (6) of the directors shall be ordained ministers in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and at least three (3) of the directors shall be lay leaders,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That Recommendation 9 of the Report of Special Committee on MTS and Clergy/Leadership Training, “That the General Assembly amend Bylaw 11.09 to read as follows: 11.09 Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns. The committee shall consist of the Stated Clerk, the President/Executive Director* of the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry, and eight (8) members elected by the corporation,” be adopted.

5. Evaluation and Accountability

Believing that evaluation and accountability are crucial to the success of any endeavor especially an education effort. Your committee makes the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 10: That the 195th General Assembly encourage the Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry to develop an evaluation and accountability system for its programs.

**NOTE: Editorial changes by the Special Committee.*

Respectfully submitted,
The Committee on MTS/Special MTS

Board of Theological Education and Lay Ministry

Organizational Chart

ELECTED BTE BOARD

- 12 elected members
 - Advisors to the Board:
- Pastoral Development Ministry Team Staff, Board of Stewardship Staff, Corresponding Seminars, Stated Clerk**

- **Staff: 1 FT Director and 1 FT Administrator**
- **Elected Board Members self-elect membership on the following service/ministries committees:**

Theological School Education Fund:

- 3 elected members of the BTE Board Staff:
- 1 FT Coordinator and Support Staff

Program of Alternate Studies (PAS)

- 3 elected members of the BTE Board
- 1 FT Coordinator and Support Staff

Lay Leadership Studies

- 3 elected members of the BTE Board
- 1 FT Coordinator and Support Staff

CP House of Studies

- 3 elected members of the BTE Board
- 1 FT Coordinator and Support Staff

**The
 Proceedings
 of the**

**ONE HUNDRED NINETY-FIFTH
 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

of the

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

session held in

**EMBASSY SUITES NW ARKANSAS
 ROGERS, ARKANSAS**

on

June 14-19, 2026

At Rogers, Arkansas and within the facilities of the Embassy Suites Hotel, Rogers, Arkansas, there the fifteenth day of June in the year of our Lord, two thousand twenty-six, 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.

On June 14th, prior to the start of General Assembly business session, Commissioners and visitors were invited to attend a pre-assembly informal come and go sing-along, hosted by Arkansas Presbytery. Music leaders for the General Assembly, the Reverend Jana Cowgill and pianist Darlis Cowgill opened the service with uplifting hymns/gospel songs and then invited others to share their musical talents, creating an evening that provided worship and fellowship.

FIRST DAY – MONDAY – JUNE 15, 2026

The day began with orientation for Commissioners and YAD's at 9:00 a.m. with prayer offered by Moderator, Reverend Jhony Montaña, Cauca Valley Presbytery. The Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk, led the orientation. He noted corrections to the Preliminary Minutes and noted there were no communications. Once the orientation was concluded, the YAD's were dismissed to meet with Brenna Truitt, CPC Youth/Young Adult Ministry Coordinator. The chairs and co-chairs of the GA committees met with Engrossing Clerk, Reverend Lisa A. Scott, for further orientation.

At 10:30 a.m., the General Assembly commissioners and guests gathered for a special Missions Conference titled "Global Future Conference", hosted by the Missions Ministry Team. The purpose of the conference was to inspire a shift in focus from inward discussions to outward action—balancing our appreciation for the past with a clear and purposeful vision for the future of the Church's global mission.

The conference featured four dynamic speakers: Reverend Jhony Montaña (Colombia), Reverend Ryuzo Matsuya (Japan), Reverend Iwao Satoh (US), Reverend Kelvin Ho (Hong Kong) and Reverend Kim Moore (US). Reverend Matsuya and Reverend Satoh talked about the history of the Japan Presbytery and the Reverend Ho talked about the history of missions in China and Hong Kong. Worship was meaningfully led by Jonathan and Carolina Calheiros, pastors of Church at the Park, who guided the participants in praise and reflection. Ms. Jinger Ellis, Manager of Finances and Administration of the Ministry Council, received a certification of Legacy of Ministry for her dedication and service to the Lord. Colegio Americano representatives, Nelly Riascos, and Angelica Poveda also talked about the 100-year celebration in 2028.

The conference was both inspiring and practical, reaffirming the denomination's commitment to global mission and the faithful work of the Holy Spirit in the Church's witness around the world.

THE ASSEMBLY IS CONSTITUTED

The Moderator, the Reverend Jhony Montaña, called the assembly to order at 2:04 p.m. He made preliminary announcements to the General Assembly, offering words of appreciation, welcome and blessing to those present. Mr. Johnny Calheiros (Cornerstone Presbytery) and Reverend David Montoya (Trinity Presbytery) provided translation services for the Moderator.

WELCOME, PASTOR HOSTS, LOCAL OFFICIALS

The Moderator, Reverend Montaña then asked the Host Pastor, Reverend Nick Chambers, pastor of Camden Cumberland Presbyterian Church and a member of Arkansas Presbytery, to speak. He brought greetings from the Presbytery, highlighting its uniqueness due to the geographical breath of the presbytery and its cultural diversity. Reverend Chambers also mentioned the availability of the host hospitality team to assist commissioners and guests during their stay. Reverend Chambers then introduced Mayor Greg Hines of Rogers, Arkansas. Mayor Hines brought greetings on behalf of the city to those assembled and well wishes for the General Assembly to accomplish its work. Finally, Reverend Chambers took a moment of privilege and read from Joshua and encouraged those present to enjoy their time in Arkansas. He also offered prayer.

The Moderator welcomed Elder Leon Cole, member of the General Assembly Executive Board (GAEB) of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (CPCA), and Moderator of Kentucky Synod of the CPCA. Elder Cole brought greetings and blessings on behalf of the CPCA.

THE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Moderator entertained a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded and the Moderator asked the youth advisory delegates and international commissioners if they were ready to vote. Both groups were prepared. By voice vote of the majority the agenda was adopted.

The Reverend Ruby Micolta, (Cauca Valey Presbytery) prayed the constituting prayer.

Moderator Montaña appointed the parliamentarian, Mr. Jaime Jordan, Legal Counsel for the Office of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The Reverend Leslie Johnson, Red River Presbytery, presented the Report of the Credentials Committee. There were forty-one (41) ministers, thirty-eight (38) elders, and twenty-four (24) youth advisory delegates making a total of one hundred-three (103) ommissioners present at 2:00 p.m. The Moderator asked the youth advisory delegates and international commissioners whether they wanted to receive and concur in the report. They were in favor of receiving the report. On motion with a second, the report was concurred in, marked appendix “A,” and filed.

ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR

The Moderator, Reverend Montaña opened the floor open for nominations for the office of Moderator of the one hundred ninety-fifth General Assembly. The following nominations, previously endorsed by their respective presbyteries, were presented: Reverend Kim Moore (Nashville Presbytery) and Reverend Daniel Barkley (Grace Presbytery). Elder Donald Kullman, (Nashville Presbytery), nominated the Reverend Kim Moore, Nashville Presbytery and a second was given. Reverend Jimmy Peyton (Columbia Presbytery) nominated Reverend Daniel Barkley with a second following. There were no further nominations from the floor.

Elder Donald Kullman spoke in favor of the nomination of the Reverend Kim Moore.

By consent the body granted permission for the Reverend Mike Wilkerson, who was not a commissioner, to address the General Assembly in support of the nomination of Reverend Daniel Barkley.

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

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

The Moderator Reverend Montaña asked the body if they might proceed to a vote. The Moderator asked the Stated Clerk to explain the voting process, that is, marking the ballots and making them available to the Credentials Committee.

While the ballots were being counted, the Moderator invited Dr. Thomas Craig, Retiring-President, Commission on Federal Chaplaincies, to come forward. Dr. Craig introduced Chaplain Dennis Hysom, Colonel (USA Retired) Executive Director, Commission on Federal Chaplaincies to bring remarks. Director Hysom spoke of chaplaincy opportunities to military personnel, to the Coast Guard Auxiliary, to the Civil Air Patrol, and in Federal prisons. Chaplain Hysom asked that presbyteries and churches encourage ministerial candidates to pursue chaplaincy as a venue for Christian witness and service.

At this point in the program, the Moderator invited Edith Old, Executive Director of Ministry Council, to come forward. She introduced new Ministry Council Staff member Angela Harrington who will be serving as Manager of Ministry Resources and Information Services.

The General Assembly offered warm applause.

INTRODUCTION OF BOARD/AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

The Engrossing Clerk, Reverend Lisa Scott, announced that committees would be visited by the following board/agency representatives:

Bethel University
Commission on Federal Chaplains
Cumberland Youth and Family Services
Historical Foundation

Judiciary
Memphis Theological Seminary
Ministry Council

Theology and Social Concerns
Our United Outreach
Board of Stewardship
Elected Officers
Special GA Committee on MTS/
Clergy Leadership Training
Special Judiciary Review Committee
Trademark Committee

Perry Moulds/Nancy Bean
Dennis Hysom/Tommy Craig
Courtney Banatoski/Brian Martin
Susan Gore/Cathy Littlefield
Rick White (Alternate)
Corey Cummings/Alan Meinzer
Jody Hill/Kip Rush
Edith Old/Kevin Jenkins/
Melinda Reams (Alternate)
Nick Chambers/Lisa Scott (Alternate)
Jeff McMichael/Mikel Davis
Robert Heflin/Gary Tubb/
Mike Sharpe/Jhony Montaña
Larry Blakeburn/Bobby Coleman

Kip Rush
Tommy Craig

RECESS

The Moderator declared recess at 3:15.

BUSINESS RESUMES

The Moderator called the General Assembly back into session at 3:24 p.m.

The Moderator asked for the results of the moderator's election. Reverend Leslie Johnson, Chair, Credentials Committee, Red River Presbytery, reported the results of the Election of the Moderator. Reverend Montaña announced that twenty-eight (28) votes were cast for Reverend Moore and forty-nine (49) votes were cast for Reverend Barkley. The Moderator declared the Reverend Daniel Barkley, Moderator of the one hundred ninety-fifth General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

The Moderator, Reverend Montaña asked Moderator-Elect Reverend Daniel Barkley and his family, wife Kaliegh, to come to the podium. The General Assembly stood as they came to the podium. Reverend Barkley thanked the General Assembly for its support and his hope that God will lead him as he carries out the duties of the office.

ELECTION OF THE VICE MODERATOR

The Moderator, Reverend Montaña opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Moderator of the one hundred ninety-fifth General Assembly. A motion with a second was made to nominate the Reverend Kim Moore (Nashville Presbytery) to fill the office of Vice-Moderator. The Moderator asked the youth advisory delegates if nominations should be closed. They were in favor of that action. On motion with a second, the body voted to close nominations and proceeded to elect Reverend Moore by acclamation. Upon her election, Reverend Moore came forward and offered words of appreciation and hopeful expectation that God will guide her as Vice-Moderator.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AND REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

The Moderator, Reverend Montaña asked for any resolutions or memorials. No resolutions or memorials were presented.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3:35 p.m. recess was declared by Moderator Montaña until Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. He reminded the body of the worship service at 7:00 p.m., at which time the Moderator-Elect and Vice-Moderator-Elect will be installed.

THE EVENING PROGRAM

The General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and visitors met at 7:00 p.m. in Pinnacle IV-V at the Embassy Suites Hotel for a worship and communion service under the direction of the General Assembly worship director, the Reverend Kathy Lofton (Red River Presbytery), who served as primary liturgist, leading the Prayer of Confession, Assurance of Pardon and Affirmation of Faith. The prelude was a video of GA children and youth set to the song "Let Us Tell." Reverend Nick Muehleback (North Central Presbytery) read the Scripture, Psalm 78:3-4. The Proclamation of Faith was given by Reverend Paula Louder (Nashville Presbytery), the Reverend Kelvin Ho (Hong Kong Presbytery), the Reverend Gwen Warren (Mid-South Presbytery) and the Reverend Nathan Scott (Choctaw Presbytery).

Retiring Moderator, the Reverend Jhony Montaña (Cauca Valley Presbytery), spoke on the importance of honoring Cumberland Presbyterian ministers and elders for their commitment to the work of the Church. He then invited Mr. Johnny Calherios to read the names listed on the Memorial Roll of ministers and elders who have died since the last meeting of the General Assembly.

Before bringing the sermon, Reverend Montaña took a few minutes to extend words of appreciation to the Reverend Dr. Milton Ortiz (Missions Ministry Team) and his wife Francia and to the Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly for the remarkable support he and his family received during his tenure as Moderator of the General Assembly. Reverend Montaña drew upon the Scripture verse Psalm 78:4 for his message. He emphasized the crucial need for Christians to tell stories of faith – as found in the Bible and taken from personal experience – stories, of God's love, God's power, and God's providential timing so that generations to come might believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Music Director, the Reverend Jana Cowgill (Arkansas Presbytery), sang and played guitar and Colby Puckett (Faith-Hopewell Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Batesville, Arkansas) sang and played the keyboard. The congregation hymns/songs included "He Reigns," "Blessed Assurance," "Build My Life," "Trust in God," and "Jesus Messiah." The postlude was "Let Us Tell."

Reverend Jhony Montaña officiated the installation of Moderator, the Reverend Daniel Barkley (Grace Presbytery) and Vice-Moderator, the Reverend Kim Moore (Nashville). He outlined the duties and responsibilities of the Moderator and then asking them if they would carry out those duties to the glory of God, while relying on the grace of God. Each answered in the affirmative. Moderator Montaña then asked the General Assembly commissioners if they would accept Reverend Barkley as Moderator and Reverend Moore as Vice-Moderator. Those present in the congregation answered with an affirmative, "We do." He then invited past Moderators, the Reverend Dr. Larry Blakeburn and Reverend Mike Wilkinson to come to the platform. Those ministers joined with Reverend Montaña in the charge and blessing of Reverends Barkley and Moore.

Co-Celebrants, Reverend Jhony Montaña and Reverend Kathy Lofton, served the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Communion was served to worshippers by Reverend Tom Merchant (Arkansas Presbytery), Reverend Rodrigo Torres (Cauca Valley Presbytery), Reverend Alex Saldana (Presbytery of del Cristo), Elder Judy McGee (Murfreesboro), Reverend Ryan Young (Hope Presbytery), Elder Shanna Lovelace (Red River Presbytery), Reverend Mindy Acton (Grace Presbytery), Elder Patti Needham (Grace Presbytery), Reverend Ryuzo Matsuya (Japan Presbytery), Elder Sam Jeffus (Arkansas Presbytery), Reverend Neal Wilkinson (Missouri Presbytery) and Elder Jo Laster (Cornerstone Presbytery). Arkansas Presbytery provided ushers for the evening service: from the Oxford Cumberland Presbyterian Church (Reverend Bobby Coleman, Elder Charley Melton, Session Clerk Lee Melton, and Elder Willetta Everett) Melinda Reams (Crossroads Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Bryant) and from the Caulksville Cumberland Presbyterian Church (Reverend Bill VanMeter, Pam VanMeter, Mike VanMeter, and Rebecca VanMeter).

Moderator-Elect, the Reverend Daniel Barkley, gave the benediction. Those in attendance were then invited to the reception honoring the newly installed Moderator and Vice-Moderator.

RECEPTION

Following the evening worship service, a “come and go” reception to honor the newly elected Moderator, the Reverend Daniel Barkley and Vice Moderator, the Reverend Kim Moore and the retiring Moderator, Reverend Jhony Montañó was held in the Spa Atrium. Reverend Barkley’s wife, Kaliegh was also in attendance.

SECOND DAY – TUESDAY – JUNE 16, 2026

The General Assembly began its day with devotions in respective committees. Forty-one (41) ministers, thirty-eight (38) elders and twenty-three (23) youth advisory delegates were in attendance in the committees.

THE AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Our United Outreach (OUO) hosted a Lunch and Learn in Pinnacle IV-V. The Reverend Jeff McMichael, Coordinator for OUO served as master of ceremonies. He invited Brenna Truitt, Cumberland Presbyterian Church Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministry to give the opening prayer and blessing of the meal. Reverend McMichael announced the purpose of the luncheon: to thank shareholders for their support of the ministry and to promote further growth of OUO as it works to fulfill its mission, “Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ Together.” He spoke on the necessity of Christians focusing on what we have in common – faith in God and love for people. He linked his remarks to the General Assembly theme scripture, ...“We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and wonders he has done,” Psalm 78:4 (New Living Translation). He noted that OUO is the funding mechanism by which the various boards/entities can tell their stories. He encouraged his listeners to believe God for revival and growth of the Church.

He shared several important facts: only 55% percent of churches participated in OUO in 2025 and yet a total of 1,953 professions of faith were recorded for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, an increase of 163% from the prior year. He offered a prayer of thanksgiving that OUO is an effective instrument being used of God to reach people with the Gospel. He noted, that in 2025, 91.4% of the financial goal of \$2.5 million was reached. Considering the statistics, the impact of inflation and the closing of some churches, the goal for 2026 has been adjusted to \$2.4 million.

He then spoke of initiatives that are underway to increase individual and congregational giving to OUO. It is his hope that each presbytery will have an OUO Ambassador who can assist congregations in understanding the importance of our connectional church. He mentioned that individuals and congregations might consider sponsoring congregations that are not yet participants in OUO (45%). A new OUO brochure is in development, including one written in Spanish. The OUO website is being updated, and the social media presence is being reviewed. Finally, a new video telling the story of OUO is also being developed.

Reverend McMichael asked Elder Mikel Davis, Chairperson of the OUO Committee, to speak. Elder Davis stated that he is completing his final year on the OUO Committee and it has been a blessing and honor to serve. He emphasized the importance of each member of a congregation feeling welcomed and that those individuals should be encouraged to give freely from the heart. If one belongs one should be able to contribute something of value, for example, time, talents, and/or financially. In closing, Elder Davis announced that OUO tee shirts would be available at no cost to the commissioners and visitors in attendance. A freewill offering in the amount of \$1,732.15 was received. Elder Davis closed the luncheon with prayer.

THE EVENING PROGRAM

At 7:30 p.m., Commissioners and visitors participated in a Joint Reception honoring Women in Ministry and all who support them in ministry in Pinnacle IV. The event was jointly sponsored by Memphis Theological Seminary/Program of Alternate Studies, Pastoral Development Ministry Team, Missions Ministry Team and Women’s Ministry. The Reverend Dr. Pam Phillips-Burk (Pastoral Development Ministry Team Leader) opened the evening with words of thanks to the commissioners and visitors who were present to honor Women in Ministry. She then invited Moderator, the Reverend Daniel Barkley to bring remarks. He spoke with enthusiasm about the important role of women as ordained clergy and of his appreciation for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which for more than one hundred-thirty-five years has enabled women to follow God’s call on their lives as ordained clergy.

Following those remarks Reverend Dr. Phillips-Burk acknowledged the newly elected Vice-Moderator, the Reverend Kim Moore. Reverend Dr. Phillips-Burk then invited the women clergy to share memories from their ordination with those seated with them at table. She also encouraged women clergy to

register for the Women Clergy Retreat, January 12-14, 2027, which will be held at the Vines Center, Little Rock, Arkansas. Reverend Dr. Michael Qualls, Program of Alternate Studies was invited to the platform. He acknowledged the Reverend Dr. Jody Hill, President of Memphis Theological Seminary before sharing his warm regards for women in ministry. Reverend Qualls presented door prize winner, the Reverend Lisa Oliver (Murfreesboro Presbytery), with a beautiful, framed color-print of Memphis Theological Seminary.

Reverend Zahrt, Director of Ministry with Women announced the recipients of the fifth annual Clergy Woman of the Year Award. The international recipient is the Reverend Diana Valdez (Andes Presbytery) and USA recipient the Reverend Terra Sisco (Red River Presbytery). Both ministers were awarded plaques and distinctive stoles. Both ministers were invited to the platform, and they expressed words of appreciation for the honor, and praising God in their respective acceptance remarks. Attendees enjoyed fellowship, refreshments, and door prizes.

THIRD DAY – WEDNESDAY – JUNE 17, 2026

The General Assembly began its day with devotions in respective committees. Forty-one (41) ministers, thirty-seven (37) elders and twenty-three (23) Youth Advisory Delegates were in attendance in committees.

THE AFTERNOON PROGRAM

Memphis Theological Seminary (MTS) and the Program of Alternate Studies (PAS) held a luncheon and program in Pinnacles IV-V. The program master of ceremonies was the Reverend Michel Qualls, Director of the Program of Alternate Studies. Reverend Dr. Qualls shared words of welcome and who invoked the words of Lamentations 3:22-23, that the mercies and compassion of God never fail but are new every morning. He then led the prayer of blessing on the meeting and meal. He then invited Reverend Dr. Jody Hill, President of MTS to bring greetings and remarks to the General Assembly. Dr. Hill remarked that the gathering was a celebration of what God had accomplished through MTS in reaching individuals with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and hopeful expectation that a new path in theological formation would emerge from the closing of MTS. He also recognized members of the Board of Trustees who were present at the luncheon: Reverend Kip Rush (Nashville Presbytery), Reverend Daniel Barkley (Grace Presbytery) and Diane Dickson (Trinity Presbytery).

Reverend Dr. Qualls invited Reverend Dr. Larry Blackburn, Chair, Special GA Committee on MTS Committee/Clergy Leadership training to make a presentation. Reverend Dr. Blackburn spoke of the origins of theological training for Cumberland Presbyterian ministers in 1853 at Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee to the move to Memphis, Tennessee in 1964. That later move shifted the focus from principally Cumberland Presbyterian theological emphasis to an ecumenical focus, which included cooperative educational endeavors with other evangelical denominations and the African American community. With the closing of MTS, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is once again shifting focus to Cumberland Presbyterian theological education that will equip ministers and congregations as they work to reflect the heart of the Gospel in their communities, whether in the United States or throughout the world.

Reverend Dr. Blackburn discussed the innovative plan the Special GA Committee has developed. Key elements of the plan include the establishment of Board of Theological Education (BTE). That board will have oversight of theological funding for those attending seminary or graduate school, the Program of Alternate Studies, the Cumberland Presbyterian (CP) House of Studies and the development a lay leaders ministry formation program. The Pastoral Development Ministry Team will have a liaison relationship with the new board. Above all prayer will be a continuing part of the process.

Reverend Dr. Blackburn invited members of the Special GA Committee to join him on the platform: Reverend Bobby Coleman (Arkansas Presbytery), Elder Mo Ottinger (Robert Donnell Presbytery), Reverend Lisa Oliver (Murfreesboro Presbytery) and Advisory Member, Mr. Jaime Jordan, Legal Counsel to the Office of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church for a question-and-answer session.

Reverend Dr. Pam Phillips-Burk, Pastoral Development Ministry Team Leader came forward to make special presentations to Reverend Dr. Qualls in honor of forty-eight years of ordained ministry and service to the denomination and to Reverend Dr. Jody Hill in honor of over twenty-six years of ordained ministry and service to the denomination. Each minister received a certificate of appreciation and a scroll cross. Those present offered warm applause to both honorees.

Reverend Dr. Blackburn served as the master of ceremonies for a Question-and-Answer Session on MTS and the future of clergy and lay leadership training within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He fielded questions from attendees. Reverend Coleman of the Special GA Committee expressed openness to receiving questions and expectation that the new Board of Theological Education would be follow with the same attitude of toward service. Reverend Dr. Blackburn closed with prayer.

