



**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**  
**187th General Assembly**  
**Cumberland Presbyterian Church**  
Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk

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

**ORGANIZATION**

1. Elected the Reverend Dr. David Lancaster, West Tennessee Presbytery, as Moderator.
2. Elected the Reverend Lisa Scott, North Central Presbytery, as Vice Moderator.
3. Elected thirty-eight people to board/agency membership.

**WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

4. The General Assembly opened with a joint worship and communion service with the CPCA. Reverend Jennifer Newell (Worship Director) served as Liturgist for the service. The Vice Moderator (CPCA), Reverend Michael Jones delivered a sermon entitled, "Evidence of Love" – Luke 10:29-5. The Reverends Dwayne Tyus (CPC) and Anne Williams (CPCA) served as Co-Celebrants for the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
5. A joint devotional on Tuesday morning was led the National Missionary Society (CPCA).

6. The Unification Task Force led the joint Tuesday evening worship service. Dr. Stan Wood delivered a sermon "The Blending of Two Sticks", based on Ezekiel 37:16-18, 21-22.
7. Rev. Kathy Dain, Executive Director at Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, delivered the sermon "Your NeighborHood", based on Luke 8:26-39. The Praise Band from the Naples CP Fellowship led the music.
- 8.. Youth Advisory Delegate, Shelby Stover, Presbytery of East Tennessee, delivered the Thursday morning devotional.
9. Reverend Jen Newell, Commissioner from Tennessee-Georgia Presbytery, led the closing worship.

**OUR UNITED OUTREACH**

10. Approved a goal of \$2,800,000 for Our United Outreach in 2018.
11. Directed the OUO Committee to change "Development Coordinator" to "Development Coordinator Office, to reflect the reality of the work performed by those who make up the ministry, not just a Director.
12. Directed the OUO Committee to extend a call to all congregations to pray and "rethink their giving" to OUO, by giving at least a tithe, if not more to fund the denomination and its programs and ministries. .

**MINISTRY COUNCIL**

13. Approved a change to Ministry Council bylaws, Article 3, section E., Meetings to add "5. Meetings. A special meeting of the Ministry Council shall be called when requested by five or more Directors.
14. Encouraged congregations, presbyteries, synods and denominational groups to adopt and practice a written safe sanctuary plan; encourage

presbyteries to maintain a copy of the safe sanctuary plan of every church and denominational entities within its jurisdiction, and encourage the Ministry Council to continue offering training and sample policies to congregations, presbyteries synods and denominational groups about subjects to consider and include when writing a safe sanctuary plan.

15. Submitted the following questions to the Ministry Council to address, sample the local congregations, and report results to the Ministry Council Committee of the 188<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 2018 and publish for the denomination to view for visioning on all church levels: 1.) Where are the greatest opportunities for our congregation to thrive in the future that you see? 2.) What do you see as the greatest threat(s) to continued, effective ministry in and through our congregations? 3.) What can we do individually, collectively, and institutionally to overcome these dangers?

#### **MISSIONS MINISTRY TEAM (MMT)**

16. Encouraged presbyteries to promote the Stott-Wallace Missionary Support Fund among the churches in their presbytery. That each presbytery clerk provides the presbytery with the promotional video to be shown at presbytery and brochures for presbytery delegates to take back to their churches.

17. Calls the CPC to be in diligent prayer for new exploration initiatives (formerly know as Mission Probes), and new church development as a means of evangelism and denominational growth in the United States. For individuals, both lay and ordained, to answer the call to church planting and for all

judicatories of the Church to emphasize starting new exploration initiatives and/or new churches by identifying individuals and geographical areas where a CP presence is needed and desirable.

18. Encouraged presbyteries who in turn encourage churches, groups, and individuals across the CPC to support Intercultural Internship opportunities through praying for the interns, and also through financially supporting the ongoing internship opportunities throughout the country.

#### **DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY TEAM (DMT)**

19. Encouraged congregations, presbyteries, synods and denominational groups to adopt and practice a written safe sanctuary plan; encourage presbyteries to maintain a copy of the safe sanctuary plan of every church and denominational entities within its jurisdiction, and encourage the Ministry Council to continue offering training and sample policies to congregations, presbyteries synods and denominational groups about subjects to consider and include when writing a safe sanctuary plan.

#### **PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY TEAM (PDMT)**

20. Approved discontinuance of the process of requiring PDMT to review exceptions made for candidates for ministry to the Program of Alternate Studies.

#### **BETHEL UNIVERSITY**

21. Approved renewing the covenantal relationship between the Bethel University and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

### **CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S HOME**

22. Approved renewing the covenantal relationship between the Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

23. Urged presbyteries and in turn churches and other groups to support the Children's Home with volunteer help, financial assistance, as well as celebrating Children's Home Sunday on March 18, 2018.

### **COMMISSION ON MILITARY CHAPLAINS & PERSONNEL**

24. Noted that the ongoing support of all of our Military Chaplains and Personnel is a vital part of the ministry of the CPC/CPCA, and commended the Commission for their work representing the CPC and the CPCA as a part of the PCCMP.

25. Recognized with gratitude the service of Reverend Larry Greenslit, Executive Director for the PCCMP, and offered best wishes for his upcoming retirement plans.

### **HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

26. Instructed presbyteries to make congregations aware of the 1810 Circle, and encourage new members to support this endeavor annually.

27. That in solidarity with our brothers and sisters of the CPCA, recommend that the Board of the Historical Foundation change the name of the 1810 Circle to the 1810/1874 Circle.

28. Make presbyteries aware that the Historical Foundation is interested and has funds to publish books on topics concerning the CPC and CPCA, and instruct them to share this information with the churches and individuals of their presbytery.

29. Instructed Presbyteries to encourage their congregations to have a special offering on the Sunday designated as Denomination Day to help support the special project designated for that year.

30. Instruct Presbyteries to encourage all congregations to preserve their session records by depositing them in the Historical Foundation.

31. Instructed each synod and presbytery to deposit their minutes in a timely fashion with the Historical Foundation.

32. Instructed presbyteries to locate the session records when closing a church and then deposit them in the Historical Foundation.

33. Expressed gratitude to the staff of the Historical Foundation, for their tireless work in preservation of the heritage of the CPC and CPCA.

### **JUDICIARY**

34. Approved the following amendment to Rules of Order 12.5, amendment to read "No member of a judicatory shall participate in debate or vote on a matter in which the member has a pecuniary interest, a personal interest, or other conflict of interest not common to other members of the judicatory. A member of a judicatory has such a conflict of interest when the member also belongs to a lower judicatory whose action is the subject of an appeal to or review by the higher judicatory. In such a case, the member may participate as a representative of the lower judicatory but may not participate as a member of the higher judicatory. Members are not prevented from voting for themselves for an office or other position to which members generally are eligible (see Robert's Rules of Order, Section 45)."

35. Approved sending Presbyteries the following amendment to the

Constitution, “that Constitution 9.5 be renumbered as 9.6 and a new 9.5 be inserted, reading as follows: “9.5 The General Assembly, in order to promote the mission work of the Church and the development of new churches outside the United States, may authorize a synod or its missions entity (utilizing ordained personnel) to act in place of a presbytery with respect to persons, ministers, and churches outside the United States and outside the bounds of any existing presbytery. The missions entity or synod may attach mission work to an existing presbytery, with the presbytery’s approval. The General Assembly shall provide for the oversight and responsibility of the body’s ecclesiastical actions.””

36. That upon ratification of the Constitutional Amendment 9.5, approved the following companion change to the GA Bylaws: “that the GA Bylaw 11.05 which refers to the Judiciary Committee, be amended by inserting 11.05.06. “The committee shall have oversight of and responsibility for ecclesiastical decisions made by a body acting in the place of a presbytery with respect to mission work and mission fields. The oversight and responsibility exercised by the committee shall be the same as that exercised by a synod with respect to a presbytery under its care, specifically Constitution 8.5, a, b, and c.”

### **MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

37. Expressed gratitude to the following individuals for their faithful service to the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary and the CPC: Marble, Ward, Wharton and Coombs.

38. Encouraged presbyteries who in turn encourage churches, groups and

individuals across the CPC to consider investing in the development of future leaders through the “Ministry for the Real World” campaign.

39. Urged presbyteries through their probationary care committees to guide probationers to consider MTS and PAS as their first option for meeting the educational requirements for ordained ministry.

40. Encouraged presbyteries who in turn encourage churches to share information about MTS and PAS and receive a special offering on Seminary/PAS Sunday (the Third Sunday in August, or a more convenient day of the session’s choosing).

41. Expressed gratitude to Reverend R. Stan Wood, D.Min. for his faithful service to Memphis Theological Seminary as well as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church/Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

### **THEOLOGY & SOCIAL CONCERNS**

42. Adopted the study papers “*A Question of Hermeneutics*” and “*Identifying and Address Elder Abuse-A Social Response*” that they be used to initiate thought and discussion within the CPC & CPCA.

43. Requested the Office of the General Assembly of both denominations make the study papers available to churches through the Stated Clerks of Presbyteries, denominational publications, all forms of digital media, and directing attention and traffic to [www.cumberland.org/uctsc](http://www.cumberland.org/uctsc), which is the website for the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns.

44. That the Resolution adopted by Japan Presbytery, “*On the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> year after WWII-Praying to be used as peacemakers, an instrument for*

*peace, at the time of the great crisis that would destroy the peace,”* be distributed to all presbyteries as a study document and to use the resolution as a model for the work of presbytery committees on theology and social concerns in order that presbyteries might begin to use their declarative authority and speak theologically to the social issues that confront the Church.

45. That Japan Presbytery be commended for their diligent theological work in response to the social concerns that face them on a daily basis.

46. Recommends to Presbyteries work such as; but not limited to “*America’s Original Sin*” by Jim Wallis, “*Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line*” by Michael Eric Dyson, “*Understanding Every Day Racism*” by Philomena Essed, and “*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*” by Michele Alexander as resources on addressing racism in America.

## **UNIFICATION**

47. Encouraged pastors, elders, sessions, churches, presbyteries and synods to continue their study and discussion of the revised Plan for Union of the CPC and CPCA, and that responses be directed to the UTF through the Office of the Stated Clerk of the CPC or Office of the Administrative Director of the CPCA.

48. Encouraged pastors, elders, sessions, churches, presbyteries, and synods to be more proactive in creating, diverse, meaningful shared community experiences world wide between the CPC and CPCA. Recommended activities include pastor/choir swaps, sporting events, VBS, and revivals, and also more effectively utilize all forms of

social media and digital communication to promote unification.

49. Instructed Boards and Agencies listed in the UTF’s Revised Plan for Union, to provide a report to the next GA (188<sup>th</sup>) that includes: 1.) Their ideas with respect to the best ways to implement unification within their board or agency, 2.) Their assessment explaining if their board or agency needs structural changes as part of unification and what those changes should be, and 3.) What the board or agency anticipates will be the approximate costs implementing unification and or restructure of their board or agency.

50. Approved that the 4th Sunday in June (beginning in 2018) be set aside as Unification Sunday and that all churches have a service geared toward unification.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

51. Instructed presbyteries to inform congregations and individuals of the denominations endowment programs and encourage churches to open their own endowment accounts; emphasizing the average return on investments since 1981, has averaged 9.8%.

52. Requested that the Board of Stewardship explore opportunities for CP’s in all states to be able to have a saving account through the Investment Loan Program.

53. Directed the Board of Stewardship to instruct presbyteries to inform congregations and individuals of the Ministerial Aid Program, in giving aid for retired ministers and surviving spouses.

## **OTHER ACTIONS**

54. Approved dates for the 2017-2018 Church Calendar.

55. Commissioned Rev. Patrick and Jessica Wilkerson as missionaries to

serve in Emaus Presbytery, Colombia, South America.

56. Elder Leon Cole Jr., Moderator of the CPCA, brought greetings to the assembly in the name of the CPCA.

57. Received a *Resolution of Forgiveness* presented by Elder Leon Cole, Moderator of the CPCA General Assembly.

58. Adopted *Resolution of Gratitude*, presented by Reverend Susan Parker, Commissioner from Hope Presbytery.

### **NEXT MEETING**

59. General Assembly adjourned to meet concurrently with the General Assembly of the CPCA on June 17-21, 2018, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Norman, Oklahoma (near Oklahoma City) .

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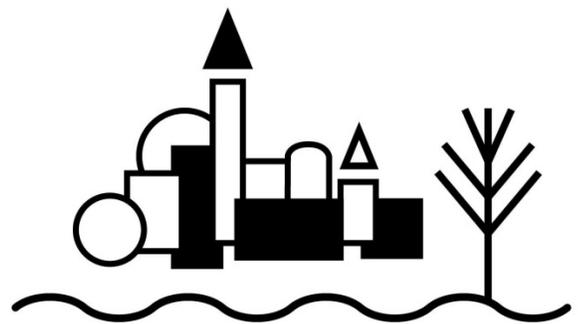
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•Online: [www.cumberland.org/gao](http://www.cumberland.org/gao)

•A limited supply of printed copies will be made available through the Cumberland Presbyterian Resource Distribution at: 901-276-4581

•Digital copies of the Minutes on CD format will also be available from the General Assembly Office. Contact Elizabeth Vaughn at: 901-276-4572 or [eav@cumberland.org](mailto:eav@cumberland.org)

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**CONNECTING WITH OUR  
NEIGHBOR**