



SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
188th 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. Jay Earheart-Brown, Nashville Presbytery, as the Moderator.
2. Elected the Reverend Buddy Pope, Columbia Presbytery, as the Vice Moderator.
3. Elected thirty-seven people to serve on denominational boards and entities.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

4. A joint CPC/CPCA Communion service was held on Sunday evening. Retiring Moderator (CPC) Reverend David Lancaster, West Tennessee Presbytery, delivered a sermon entitled, *"What About These Bones?"* based on Ezekiel 37:1-14. The Reverends Melissa Malinowski (West Tennessee Presbytery, CPC) and Tremaine Snodgrass (Huntsville Presbytery, CPCA) served as co-celebrants of the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
5. A joint CPC/CPCA celebration was held on Monday afternoon, commemorating the 200th anniversary of ministry with the Choctaw (earliest mission work of the CPC). Choctaw Chief Gary Batton was the guest speaker.

6. The National Missionary Society led the joint CPC/CPCA devotional on Wednesday morning.

7. The Young Adults led the worship service on Wednesday evening.

8. Youth Advisory Delegate, Yahaira Patricio, Youth Advisory Delegate from Tennessee-Georgia Presbytery, brought the devotional on Thursday morning.

9. Reverend Melissa Malinowski, worship director for General Assembly, delivered the closing devotional based on John 10:11-18.

OUR UNITED OUTREACH

10. Approved a goal of \$2,600,000 for Our United Outreach (OUO) for 2019.

11. Directed the Unification Task Force and Development Coordinator Office of OUO to account for expenditures to the OUO committee.

12. Requested that presbyteries challenge churches to invite an OUO Regional Representative or member of the OUO committee to speak in their congregation.

13. Added three Youth Advisory Members (between the ages of 15-17) to the membership of the OUO Committee.

14. Challenged the OUO Committee to utilize all forms of communication and technology in order to reach every generation.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

15. Assigned a Committee to work with the Discipleship Ministry Team in developing conducting a census/survey of all congregations in regards to particular churches use of the Encounter Publication with the results of that census/survey disseminated through the stated clerks of each presbytery by the 190th General Assembly.

**COMMISSION ON MILITARY
CHAPLAINS AND PERSONNEL**

16. Encouraged the Our United Outreach Committee to increase the amount of OUO allocated for the Commission on Chaplains by 2% for the fiscal year 2020.

17. Instructed presbyteries to encourage congregations in the United States to receive an offering on the last Sunday of May, or another special day, to support our ministry to military

chaplains through Presbyterian Council of Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP).

18. Requested presbyteries to encourage congregations in the United States to determine and designate special days through the year to hold up the Chaplains and their families in the service to which they have been endorsed.

MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

19. Encouraged presbyteries to encourage individuals, churches and groups across the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to consider investing in the development of future leaders through the “Ministry for the Real World Campaign.”

20. Expressed gratitude to Reverend Dr. Kevin Henson and Reverend Jen Newell, Craig White, Reverend Kevin Brantley, Mark Maddox and Ted Shirai for their faithful service on the Board of Trustees.

21. Requested that all presbyteries encourage all probationers to consider Memphis Theological Seminary or the Program of Alternate Studies as their first options for meeting the educational requirement for ordained ministry.

22. Expressed gratitude to Reverend Dr. Daniel Jay Earheart-Brown for his 13 and one-half years of faithful service as President to Memphis Theological Seminary.

23. Encouraged Memphis Theological Seminary Board of Trustees to hire a Cumberland Presbyterian to fill the office of interim and permanent president.

24. Approved the formation of an Evaluation Committee to assess the a.) Board of Trustees, b.) the Seminary Faculty and Staff, and present its findings to the 189th meeting of the General Assembly.

25. Instructed the Program of Alternate Studies to use a standardized template for class syllabi.

BETHEL UNIVERSITY

26. Commended Board of Trustees for their hard work and for the future plans at Bethel.

27. Urged presbyteries to encourage churches and individuals to pray for Bethel University and send names of prospective students (both high schoolers and adults) to Bethel University.

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN’S HOME

28. Recommended that all presbyteries, and especially those close to the Children’s Home, seek opportunities to support and participate in the work of the Children’s Home.

29. Requested the Communications Ministry Team of the Ministry Council to collaborate with the Children’s Home to advertise open positions, volunteer opportunities, service trip opportunities or other areas of need of the Children’s Home.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

30. Instructed presbyteries to make congregations aware of the 1810/1874 Circle, and encourage new members to support this endeavor annually.

31. 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.

32. Requested that presbyteries make known to churches and individuals that the Historical Foundation is interested and has funds to publish books on topics concerning the CPC and CPCA.

33. Approved the formation of an Evaluation Committee to assess the Historical Foundation and present its findings to the 189th meeting of the General Assembly.

JUDICIARY

34. Approved sending the following proposed changes to the Constitution to the Joint Committee on Amendments for consideration:

a. That the Preamble to the Constitution be amended by inserting the following paragraph between the first and second existing paragraphs: *“Cumberland Presbyterian congregations are found around the world. While the mission of the church is the same everywhere, the forms and structures of the Constitution and Rules of Discipline do not always fit seamlessly with the cultures, traditions, and legal systems of some countries. In countries other than the United States the provisions of the Constitution and Rules of Discipline should be applied so far as possible, but the Constitution and Rules of Discipline are,*

at heart, documents which exist to promote spiritual objectives. If there are instances in which the letter of the Constitution and/or Rules of Discipline cannot be applied without compromising the mission of the church and the spiritual objectives identified in the Confession of Faith, it is the spirit of the law, rather than the letter, which must prevail." Cumberland Presbyterian congregations....

b. That Constitution 3.03 be amended to read: "The authority of each level of church government is limited by the stated provisions of the Constitution. Although each judicatory exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all the matters specifically belonging to it, the lower judicatories are subject to the review and appellate authority of the next higher judicatory."

c. That Constitution 3.35 be amended to read: "A particular church shall not sell, nor lease its real property used for purposes of worship, nurture or ministry, without the written permission of the presbytery in which the particular church is located, transmitted through the session of the particular church." to read "A particular church shall not sell, convey, lease, pledge, mortgage, or encumber its real property used for purposes of worship, nurture, or ministry without the written permission of the presbytery in which the particular church is located, transmitted through the session of the particular church. In granting its permission, the presbytery does not become a party to the church's agreement, nor a guarantor of any indebtedness."

d. That the Constitution 7.06 be amended to read:

"A person shall enter into one of these relationships with a particular church only with the approval of the presbytery in the bounds of which the particular church is located. The church session shall bear responsibility for the selection of the person, and the presbytery's approval shall relate to the person's ministerial credentials, commitment to the theology and government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church/Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, and standing in his or her current presbytery, if any. The presbytery may authorize its board of missions to act on its behalf in examining the call and to give tentative approval to a relationship between a particular church

and a minister, licentiate, or candidate, subject to formal approval at a meeting of the presbytery."

e. That the Constitution 8.5 (f) be amended to read: "In general, to order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and churches under its care according to the government of the church, whatever pertains to their spiritual welfare and the edification of the church."

f. That the Constitution 9.4 (d) be amended to read: "Institute and review the work of denominational entities."

g. That the Constitution 9.4 (g) be amended to read: "Take care that the lower judicatories observe the government of the church and exercise its review and appellate authority to redress what they may have done contrary to order."

h. That the Constitution 9.4 (m) be amended to read: "Keep watch over the affairs of the whole church."

35. Amended General Assembly Bylaw 10.6 to read: "The Corporation shall elect the directors in such manner that, immediately following any election, there shall be eleven (11) directors who are members of denominations other than the Cumberland Presbyterian Church."

UNIFICATION TASK FORCE

36. Approved a proposed timeline for action for the unification of the CPC and CPCA denominations.

37. Encouraged the UTF and MC to establish a viable network of communication so that they may continue to work for a successful unification of the CPC and the CPCA.

38. Recommended that the fourth Sunday in June 2019 be recognized in CPC and CPCA as Unification Sunday, and that all presbyteries encourage their churches to pray for our unity in Jesus Christ, and for discernment as we seek to express our unity more fully in the future.

39. Expressed gratitude to Pam Phillips-Burk for her faithful service on the Unification Task Force.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP, FOUNDATION AND BENEFITS

40. Commended the work of the Board and their hard work on behalf of ministers, churches, and all others they serve.

41. Approved the amended plan and updates of the Cumberland Presbyterian Retirement Plan #2. The amended portion of the plan: *“As a Participant, you may elect to defer a percentage of your compensation each year instead of receiving that amount in cash. There are two types of pre-tax contributions that you can make under the plan: basic contributions and elective contributions. You may defer up to 5% of your pay as a basic contribution. Once you have reached the contribution limit for the basic contribution, you may defer an additional percentage or dollar amount of your pay as an elective contribution. However, the total deferrals that you can elect to defer from your pay in any taxable year may not exceed certain dollar limit, which is set by law. The limit for 2018 is \$18,500.”*

THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

42. Joined with the chorus of other denominations in denouncing the abhorrent treatment of those attempting to apply for asylum or enter into the United States from our southern border, particularly the practice of dividing children from their parents, contributing to terror, uncertainty and unnecessary cruel suffering to families of God’s beloved.

43. Requested that the Permanent Judiciary and the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns along with the Ministry Council (for input from a cross-culture/international perspective) work jointly to develop a position statement on issues of human sexuality to be presented to the 189th General Assembly for its consideration.

MISCELLANEOUS

44. The first annual 5k Fun Run/Walk was held on Tuesday morning.

45. A special presentation was made by the Michael Qualls, Director for the Program of Alternate Studies (PAS) in memory of the ministry of the late Reverend Dale Gentry, Arkansas Presbytery.

46. In commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of the denomination’s ministry with the Choctaw, a handcrafted Native American flute, made by elder Mikel Davis (Shiloh Church, Ovilla, Texas), was presented to the Historical Foundation.

47. Adopted a *Resolution of Thanks* presented by Elder George Ladd, Columbia Presbytery.

48. Accepted an invitation from Robert Donnell Presbytery (CPC) and Huntsville Presbytery (CPCA), to host the concurrent meeting of the 189th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the 144th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

NEXT MEETING

49. The General Assembly adjourned to meet in Huntsville, Alabama on June 9-14, 2019. The meeting will be held concurrently with the CPCA General Assembly.

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

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

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send me
200 YEARS OF MINISTRY WITH THE
CHOCTAW