

**A Liturgy for Denomination Day**  
**February 3, 2013**  
**Elinor Swindle Brown**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Two hundred and three years ago, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was born out of the prayers of our forbears.

**People: Be to us a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save us, for you are our rock and our fortress.**

Leader: Since the birth of this, your Church, O God, we have looked to you to light our way.

**People: For you, O Lord are our hope, our trust, O Lord, from our youth.**

Leader: We are your people, O God, ready to share your Good News with all.

**People: Our praise is continually of you. Meet us in this place, so we may worship you all of our days.**

(adapted from Psalm 71:1-6)

**Call to Confession**

God calls us always to share faith, hope and love, but as sinners we often put our own needs first. In mercy, God asks that we confess our sins, turn from them and receive God's forgiveness. As the people of God, let us confess our sins.

**Prayer of Confession**

O God of our lives, we ask for your mercy today. On this day when we celebrate the birth of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, we are aware of our short comings, both as a community and as individuals. We know that many times we speak without love and our words are simply noise to your ears. We proclaim our faith in you and yet have denied our love of one another. We boast of what we give away, but hoard the best of ourselves, living lives of selfishness and greed. And most of all, we have not been patient and kind, but rather arrogant and rude, irritable and resentful. For all these transgressions, we humbly ask your forgiveness. Give us the love and passion of Ewing, McAdow, King and Woosley, to love you and love others so much that we would sacrifice ourselves to share your love, grace and mercy with those around us. Open our eyes and ears to the blessings you give, so we might live each day with grateful hearts. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, believe this. God has heard our confession, our cry for freedom from our wrongs and graciously forgives our sins. In Christ Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we have been set free. Thanks be to God!

**Prayer for Illumination**

O God, as the founders of our Church prayed to discern your path, we ask that you open our eyes and light our path so we may see your truth and understand your word for us today. Amen.

### **Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon**

**Jeremiah 1:4-10**—Parallel the call of Jeremiah to the call of the Cumberland Presbyterian forebears

**Luke 4:21-30**—Parallel the struggle of Jesus to be a prophet in his hometown with the struggle of the CPC forebears in the early days of the Church

**Isaiah 51:1-6**—Parallel the early CPC on the frontier with today's CPC being hewn from the rock of the pioneer spirit

### **Prayers of the People**

God of the Past, we praise your Holy Name for you have been the God of Abraham and Sarah, the God of Ewing and McAdow, the God of Woosley and King, the God of Pepper and Davis, the God of Gonzalez and Roa, the God of Quah and Stott, the God of all who have served before today in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. We thank you for the example of all the saints who have gone before us and know, through them, your kingdom has come closer here on earth.

God of the Present, we know that you are still calling people into your service every day. We pray for our Moderator Robert Rush, our Stated Clerk Mike Sharpe, our Director of Ministry Edith Old, all the executives of our institutions, and staff who work in denominational roles, and the pastors, staff and laity whose ministries in local communities are sure signs of your ever-present grace.

God of the Future, we ask that you bless those who will come after us to work in your name. Bless those who are now being educated for ministry both professionally and as volunteers for the Church. Bless the young people and children of our churches that they may be nurtured by their congregations and families to be the future leaders of the church. Bless future ministries. Give us insight to see the paths to which you are calling us to and the courage to choose them when the time comes.

In our past, in our present, in our future, we know you are with us. Keep us in the sunlight of your love always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Invitation to the Offering**

As Cumberland Presbyterians, we believe that we are all called by God—all called to serve, all called to minister, all called to give. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, both locally and globally, is able to fulfill the Great Commission in the world preaching the gospel, teaching and baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit only because we as individuals recognize our great opportunity to give. Let us give of ourselves through our tithes and offerings.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

God, just as you gave to the saints of the Church before us, you have given to us. Through these gifts, we are saying that we recognize these blessings and return a portion of them to your work here and abroad. Take our gifts, consecrate them and use them to do your work. Amen.

**Charge**

God is calling us as surely as God called Cumberland Presbyterians in the past. God is asking us to respond in love to a world that is hurting. Go now and do and be that to which God is calling you.

**Benediction**

And as you go, may the God who brought us into being, the Son who saved us from sin and the Holy Spirit who guides us through our lives, be with us all. Now and forever. Amen.