

## A Liturgy for CPC Ministries

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### Calls to Worship

*adapted from Psalm 8*

Leader: The Lord be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
Leader: How majestic is God's name throughout the earth.  
**People: God's glory is higher than the heavens.**  
Leader: Who are we that God should consider us,  
**People: what kind of mortals that God should care for us?**  
Leader: Yet, God has crowned us with glory and honor,  
**People: and given us power to share in holy work;**  
Leader: to rule as God would rule,  
**People: spreading peace and salvation throughout the earth.**  
Leader: O Lord, our Sovereign,  
**People: how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

OR

*adapted from John 14:12*

Leader: The Lord be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
Leader: Jesus said to his disciples:  
**People: you will do greater works than I do, for I am going to the Father.**  
Leader: Greater acts of compassion, deeper works of mercy;  
**People: greater words of healing, multiple prayers for peace;**  
Leader: Greater spread of the gospel, a broader reach of forgiveness;  
**People: greater preaching of truth, a world-wide call to faith.**  
Leader: We will do great works in God's name,  
**People: the power of the risen Christ working through us.**

OR

*adapted from the Catechism of the CP Church*

Leader: The Lord be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
Leader: What is the purpose of the church?  
**People: The purpose of the church is to worship God  
and to share God's love with the world.**  
Leader: What does the church do in worship?  
**People: The church gathers in the presence of the living God  
to celebrate God's wonderful deeds.**  
Leader: What does God do in worship?

**People:** In worship, God nourishes and strengthens the church through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments, which are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

**Leader:** How do we share the love of God in Jesus Christ?

**People:** We share the love of God in Jesus Christ by telling others the good news about Jesus and by helping those who suffer and are oppressed.

**Leader:** O God, help the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to fulfill its duties.

**People:** Make us faithful, dear God, make us faithful.

### Call to Confession

The prophet Jeremiah declares that God will be our God, and we will be God's people. Knowing that God hasn't given up on us, let us confess how we have gone astray, and ask for help in time of need.

### Prayer of Confession

O God, you desire for the church to be one,  
but we quarrel and divide, and forget our connection  
to other congregations that bear our name.  
Forgive us.

You promise to reclaim lost lives through the work of your church,  
but we are afraid to take risks, get bogged down in details that don't matter,  
and are easily discouraged when results are slow to come.  
Forgive us.

You have given us a rich heritage in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,  
but we fail to pass down our beliefs with energy and creativity,  
and overlook the wealth in our history.  
Forgive us.

You are exceedingly patient with us,  
but we quickly grow tired of working with one another,  
and lose confidence in your promise that all things work together for good  
for those who love you and are called according to your purpose.  
Forgive us.

You have promised to be up ahead of us, opening the future,  
but we cling to what we know and place our own comfort  
over your call to move forward.  
Forgive us.

God of mercy, fill our congregations, our presbyteries, our synods and our general  
assembly with new vision and holy fire,  
so that we may move with confidence toward the new day dawning;  
and so knit together our work by your Spirit  
that we will do more together than we could do alone;

through Christ Jesus, Lord of all and Head of the Church. Amen.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news! Jesus said anything we ask in his name, he will do it. Forgiveness? He will do it. New start? He will do it. Letting go of whatever is holding us back, holding on to whatever we need to carry forward? Consider it done. Friends, trust the gospel: Jesus Christ forgives, and gets us moving back into ministry.

### **Prayers for Illumination**

Eternal God, help us to hear what you want to say. And help not only this congregation to hear, but all congregations in this presbytery; and not only our presbytery, but all presbyteries in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Help us to hear your fresh, living word through the power of the Spirit, so we may receive your grace and get busy with your business. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**OR**

True God, through the work of your Holy Spirit, speak truth to us now. We need more than our own words echoing back to us. Break open these texts and this sermon so we may hear your word to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Give us your call, your mission. Speak, Lord, and grant us the grace of obedience. Amen.

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

- Genesis 12:1-3, God's promise to make a people who will bless all other peoples
- Isaiah 44:24-28, God's promise to rebuild God's people after destruction
- Matthew 28:16-20, Christ's commission to his disciples
- 1 Corinthians 12, Various gifts that make up the body, all of which are needed
- John 17:20-24, Jesus' high priestly prayer, asking that all believers be one
- 1 Peter 1:1 & 2, salutation to dispersed churches who share belief in Christ
- Mark 6:6b-13, Jesus sends his disciples as missionaries, traveling light

### **Prayers of the People**

God of mercy, you want our prayers, halting and troubled as they may be. Thank you for listening when your children pray. We ask you not only to consider what we ask, but to change us as we pray so that we look more and more like you.

Bless those who work for our denomination: all team leaders, ministry directors, elected servants and the staff members who support them. Let the sparks of creativity fly when they gather to plan. Use their differences to enrich our work. When difficulties arise, let them lead to new insights and fresh possibilities for ministry. And may the larger church always appreciate their hard work.

We praise you, O God, for new Cumberland Presbyterian congregations sprouting all over the world, sometimes in the poorest of places. Watch over ministers and

missionaries serving these congregations, and may their conviction challenge our complacency, their vigor expose how we have lost our first love.

We celebrate with you the new approaches to communication and the new visions for ministry that are coming from our denominational center. And we ask your help in honoring that work by participating in the programs offered to us. Continue to nurture the bonds that make us one.

Be with us, God, as we struggle to relate to the new age that is unfolding around us. Old certainties are slipping, and we're not sure how to meet this different time. Give us good sense not to blame each other when we become frustrated in our work. Instead, show us how to walk together a few feet at a time, trusting you to reform the church as it needs to reform to meet new demands.

But keep us committed to the belief that whoever wants can respond to the gospel. Help us hold open the door to any who feel drawn to your life and mercy, and make us eager to spread the blessed tidings all around that you, a loving God, are calling your children home.

Receive our prayers, offered in hope, and keep us praying until all that we do is connected to you and your wonderful will for the world; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**OR**

*(Note: With this guided prayer, you may want to include a list of names of staff and elected team members as a bulletin insert. These names can be found at <http://ministrycouncil.org>).*

God of mercy, hear the prayers of your church, and guide what we say through your Spirit.

We pray for the Discipleship Ministry Team that educates and equips all ages to serve and follow Jesus Christ.... (silence).

We pray for the Communications Ministry Team that produces the Cumberland Presbyterian magazine, the Missionary Messenger and other materials to inform and empower the church.... (silence).

We pray for the Missions Ministry Team that coordinates and initiates mission work around the world and in our backyard.... (silence).

We pray for the Pastoral Development Ministry Team that supports clergy and holds up the call to ordained ministry in the life of the church.... (silence).

We pray for the Ministry Council that oversees all of this work, and plans for the future.... (silence).

Bless the Historical Foundation, the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits, the Office of the General Assembly and all other boards and agencies that they may undergird the work of the denomination.... (silence).

Thank you, God, for paying attention to us. Use these prayers, and sift them, so that your will is done. Amen.

### **Invitation to the Offering**

Whenever we give at this table, we give to the work of the larger church. And this is not an unhappy burden, but one we accept with thanksgiving, because we can do together what we couldn't do alone. Let us join the world-wide work of God through our gifts this morning.

**OR**

Paul was pleased when the saints in Macedonia wanted to give to the saints in Jerusalem. We, too, know the joy of sharing what we have with other believers so that all of us can follow Christ more faithfully. With glad hearts, let us offer our gifts to the Lord.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Generous God, we thank you for your love,  
unconditional and faithful to the end,  
that welcomes us into your reign.  
And we rejoice in the privilege of extending that love  
to the world in Christ's name.  
Through the gifts we place on this table,  
bless the community around us.  
Take a portion of it, and through Our United Outreach,  
support the work of our larger church:  
forming ministers, equipping lay people, starting new congregations,  
serving distant neighbors, discipling children, youth, and adults,  
preserving our heritage and dreaming our future.  
Keep us generous, knowing that all good gifts come from you,  
and to you all gifts return;  
through Jesus Christ who gave his life for us. Amen.

### **Charge and Blessing**

Go in peace, remembering while you are at work,  
your church is at work, spreading the good news of God's love.  
And now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,  
who makes the church one body,  
and the love of God, who speaks many languages,  
and the world-wide communion of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you and all believers always. Amen.