

A Liturgy for Denomination Day
February 1, 2015
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Call to Worship

One: For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son,

Many: that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

One: God so loved the world that God reconciles the world without condemnation,

**Many: we are loved, we are not condemned, we will not perish,
we will be with God forever.**

One: We come in faith to worship together as a church called to claim our heritage. A legacy of ministry that was birthed by passion for telling the gospel message and nurtured by the Spirit who continues to lead and guide us.

Many: Our faith brings us together in faithfulness to worship.

**We gather together in many congregations to listen to the scriptures
and to study together seeking to discern God's will.**

One: We are Cumberland Presbyterians—a diverse community of faith that celebrates our common confession of faith in Jesus Christ. We are Cumberland Presbyterians who continue to participate in the creation of a new Heaven and a new Earth.

**Many: We are Cumberland Presbyterians:
a people who have followed God to frontiers of need,
frontiers on the edge of new adventure and frontiers of new vision.**

One: Cumberland Presbyterians are missionary people, spreading the good news that God calls men and women, young and old, rich and poor to ministries of mercy and justice.

**Many: We remember and celebrate our heritage giving thanks for the courage
and perseverance of our mothers and fathers.**

They listened to God's voice and said yes to a new direction.

We want to listen again and say yes today.

**We want to spread the good news on the frontier
that is always just outside our doors.**

**All: For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes
in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

Call to Confession

God has been faithful in proving to us God's desire to restore the relationship initiated at our creation. We feel unworthy and yet God comes to us to listen to our painful regret and need for forgiveness. Let us together, as a community of believers, offer up to God our prayers for the restoration of that relationship without which we are lost. Let us worship through our prayers of confession.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God,

we are often more willing to celebrate our past
than to acknowledge our current need for forgiveness.

We want to enjoy the fruits of our founders and past leaders without the reminders

that even that past has come with very real, very flawed realities.
So we come to you now acknowledging that without forgiveness as a church
we are useless to you.

Restore our relationships with you and with each other
that we have so carelessly neglected and rejected.

Heal the brokenness that we deny exists in our personal lives and in our communities of faith.

Bring us into a life that seeks to have empathy for each other
even as we remain passionate about our understanding of who you are.

Help us to listen and really hear each other.

Teach us that you are a God of all people
and that it is we who limit the message of your acceptance and love.

We are a church in need of tolerance.

We are a church in need of revival.

We are a church in need of forgiveness.

We cry out to our Redeemer who is Christ. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

It is not because of anything that we have done or said that fulfills promises of our forgiveness. It is the grace and mercy of a loving God that we experience together in this moment. Our past is reclaimed and our present renewed. If our God forgives and restores our relationship with God then we are empowered through God's graciousness to forgive each other, how could we do less in response to a gift so freely given? Thanks be to God we are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Shine your light upon the words of life to us in this moment. You have spoken through your servants in history and service. You have spoken through the ministry we have witnessed through two centuries as Cumberland Presbyterians. Focus us once again on the scriptures that give our history perspective and our future a calling. May the message we hear together open us to the prophetic proclamation of the holy. Let us respond with willing hearts and inspiration to live our lives as a reflection of your revelation. In the name of the Word made flesh. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Deuteronomy 18:15-20
- Psalm 111
- 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
- Mark 1:21-28

Prayers of the People

One: Loving God, we come to you with hearts full of thanksgiving for the opportunity to experience your presence in the life of our denomination. You have been faithful to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in all of the ways that we have needed you and for this,

Many: We offer you thanks and praise.

One: Inspiring God, long years ago Samuel King, Samuel McAdow and Finis Ewing and their families sought your will in their lives. Through them you spoke a new message for the people they preached to as they pushed the boundaries of their land. For these founders, their families and that message,

Many: We offer you thanks and praise.

One: Surprising God, you used that spirit of broadening boundaries to call our mother in ministry, Louisa Woosley to answer you and to preach. Her ministry was a beacon to all that God calls, women called to preach and challenging a system of inequality and for this,

Many: We offer you thanks and praise.

One: Creative God, through ordinary men and women, boys and girls you have faithfully shared your energy through this denomination. Out of a prayer meeting to find clarity in the midst of frustrations a new branch of your church was born that has uniquely lived out your call, no longer out of frustration but with a burning passion for sharing the good news. Because of this,

Many: We offer you thanks and praise.

One: We pray together as a church for pastors and congregations. For pastors who serve faithfully regardless of limited income. For congregations who struggle to survive but do not give up because of God's call. For sacrifices that both pastors and congregations make to support ministry in small towns and urban areas,

Many: We thank you and lift them up to you.

One: We pray for church leaders, ministry teams and global ministry partners. Give wisdom where it is needed and guide those that you call to continue to lead the church into the future,

Many: We thank you and lift them up to you.

One: We pray for unity in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Help us to avoid divisions that restrict the work of building your kingdom. Help us to work toward understanding and reconciliation which is necessary to realize your realm among us.

Many: We offer our thanks and praise for a rich heritage of ministry in difficult times and in times of ease.

We offer our thanks and praise for a present that is filled with new life and new possibilities around the globe.

We offer our thanks and praise for the future that we now lift up to you God.

Fill us with your passionate Spirit as we seek to live the Christ life in our world.

All: Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

We are invited by God to share our blessings. We are inspired by the sharing of all of those who have gone before us to be givers. Let us worship together in community to give with supportive joy in order to continue God's work through the church.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of all gifts, we are often in awe of the provisions you make for us in our personal lives and in the life of our church. Bless our memories of the sacrifices of saints and bless these offerings that represent a belief in the future of your work through the Cumberland Presbyterian witness in the world.

Charge

Go from this place filled with the knowledge that God calls us into the world, having equipped us through words of scripture, supported us by an ever present cloud of witnesses and sustained us through grace which continues to be realized with each generation to serve with loving mercy, to work for justice and to walk in humility with our Lord.

Benediction

Experience each day in the sunlight of God's love. In the name of God who is the Creator, our parent, God who is the Christ, our sibling and God who is the Spirit, our friend. Amen.