

## A Liturgy for Denomination Sunday

February 5, 2017

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### Call to Worship

Leader: Praise the Lord!  
Happy are the Cumberland Presbyterians who fear the Lord,  
who greatly delight in God's commandments.

**People: We know we are rich;  
we strive to be gracious, merciful, and righteous.**

Leader: God reminds us to conduct our affairs with justice,  
for then our hearts will be steady and we will not be afraid.

**People: The teachings and beliefs of our spiritual ancestors  
are still making a mighty impact in our churches.  
We remember them with great reverence!**

—based on Psalm 112 NRSV

### Call to Confession

God, through the prophet Isaiah, tells us what God expects of us: to loose the bonds of injustice, to let the oppressed free, to cover the naked and more. God asks us the same questions that Isaiah asks: Will we see? Will we humble ourselves? Let us pray.

### Prayer of Confession (unison)

**God, in Isaiah 58 you condemned Israel's fasting because they were not truly worshipping you through it. It isn't a big deal for us to fast or not, because Christ brought us salvation that doesn't command us to do so. But God, you also asked the Israelites to do some things that are so relevant for us today. And we know we fall short. You expect us to right injustices, to free the oppressed, to share our bread with the hungry, to be kind to the homeless poor, to cover them when they are naked. These actions are what Jesus asked of his disciples. And these actions are what Jesus asks of us today. We Cumberland Presbyterians can point to many achievements of our denomination, but we also know that we can point to our failures to fulfill the basic teachings of Christ. Bless us. Forgive us where we fail you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

—based on Isaiah 58 NRSV

### Assurance of Pardon

We are told to follow God's commands. We are told that when we call, God will answer, when we cry for help, God will say "Here I Am." Praise God that through the Son, Jesus Christ, we have been saved from all sin. We are forgiven and can believe the good news. Thanks be to God.

### Prayer for Illumination

Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth thou sendest clear, and while the wave notes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear. Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, your will to see; open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine! Amen.

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

- Psalm 112
- Isaiah 58
- 1 Corinthians 2
- Especially Matthew 5:13-20

### **Pastoral Prayer**

God, here we are, Cumberland Presbyterians celebrating another Denomination Day. On these yearly commemorations, we probably spend too much time looking back, and remembering. Perhaps we remember when our church was new and the congregation filled what are now empty spaces. Maybe we remember the pastor who meant so much to us personally, with his or her sermons, and participation in some of the great events in our lives: like a wedding, or a baptism. Or, perhaps we remember the great things that were done for God through the sainted persons who have worshipped where we now sit and give praise to you.

On this Denomination Day, steer our hearts and minds today. We know from the many sermons that we have heard here, that you are still working through us, still attempting to reach the unsaved, still insisting that we feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and, in general you are telling to be the church to those outside our walls, as well as to those who sit next to us on the pews. Help us to remember that, like our spiritual ancestors, we too are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Remind us that, like them, we, too, are called to go into the world with the strength of your Spirit, and with the truth of your word.

On this Denomination Day, God, tell us that what we know of you today is the same knowledge that our spiritual descendants will acknowledge in the future. More than that, we ask you to shape our Church's future by helping it be faithful to you. Bless our efforts to be your people in all things we do. Amen.

### **Invitation to the Offering**

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 2:12 that we have received “the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.” In this Spirit, let continue to worship God by giving to God our tithes and offerings.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Gracious God, for all the gifts you have given to us, we can only say thanks. And we can also respond by giving back some of what has been entrusted to us. Bless these gifts, and may they be used for your purposes. Amen.

### **Benediction**

You are the salt of the earth  
and the light of the world.  
Since you have been blessed,

go into the world to offer your blessing to others. Amen.