

A Liturgy for CP Ministries Sunday

June 10, 2018

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Call to Worship

Leader: We gather here, in community, to praise God, to sing to God,
to listen for God, to make offerings to God.

People: We gather to offer God our very best worship.

Leader: May our worship in this hour bring God joy.

People: And may none of us leave here the same as we arrived.

Call to Confession

From the depths of our despair let us call upon God, believing God's promise to forgive us and to keep no record of our sins. With trust in God's constant love and endless desire to save, let us confess our sins.

adapted from Psalm 130

Prayer of Confession

We confess, God, that sometimes we focus too much on ourselves and our own needs, neglecting our responsibilities as part of this community called [insert name of congregation] Cumberland Presbyterian Church. We confess that we often fail to think of this church as part of a presbytery and a denomination, too worried about the activities and needs right here to see beyond them.

We confess that we sometimes cause division in the body of Christ by allowing dissimilar ideas about politics or theology to keep us from joining brothers and sisters in doing ministry.

Forgive us, merciful God, for forgetting or ignoring that to be Cumberland Presbyterian is to be connectional. For Christ's sake, for the Church's sake, give us the strength, faith, and courage—as a congregation, as part of a presbytery and denomination—to discern and do your will.

Assurance of Pardon

Church, hear this good news and rejoice in it: through Christ Jesus we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

By your grace, O God, grant that we may hear your voice speaking through holy scripture and its proclamation. May our response to the truth your word brings be to take what we hear today and share it with the world. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- 1 Samuel 8:4-20. Focus 1: the Israelites' ignored God's will in their desire to be like other nations. Does the Church do this? Focus 2: God's will is revealed to and through the community rather than one person. This is why we have sessions, presbyteries, GA, and committees of both clergy and laity rather than a single "king" (bishop/pope).

- Mark 3:20-35. Focus 1: a divided congregation/denomination will be ineffective. Are there cliques in your church? Do our presbytery/denomination-level teams cooperate? Focus 2: our global and cross-cultural ministry partners are brothers/sisters. Focus 3: cooperation vs. competition between the churches in your community.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-31. Focus: your congregation, or the denomination, is one body but needs and utilizes various gifts and calls.
- 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1. Focus: This passage can refer to the individual believer, but also to the congregation or denomination. Is the “physical body” decaying? Is more attention paid to material or spiritual things?

Prayers of the People

Thank you, God, for the connection we in this room share with almost 70,000 other believers around the world because we are Cumberland Presbyterians.

Bless the ministries we join together to do in the coming weeks:

- presbytery’s summer camps for youth and children
- CPYC
- Children’s Fest

Bless our ongoing ministries as well:

- new churches starting in more than 10 countries
- the education provided through Bethel University, Memphis Theological Seminary, and the Program of Alternate Studies
- the curriculum and leadership training produced by the Discipleship Ministry Team
- the help for families and children provided through the Children’s Home
- the preservation of our history through the Historical Foundation
- ministering to our 900 ministers through the Pastoral Development Ministry Team
- the relaying of important news through the Communications Ministry Team
- the work of the Ministry Council in coordinating all of this
- and the hundreds of other local and regional ministries carried out by presbyteries, congregations, and individuals who are Cumberland Presbyterian.

Thank you, God, for making us a grassroots denomination, trusting authority only to laypersons and clergy in community. Bless the representatives our 24 presbyteries have elected to be at General Assembly in Oklahoma next week. Reveal your will to them as they gather, and may peace prevail there. [Consider praying for your presbytery’s representatives by name, those names are available in preliminary minutes at cumberland.org/gao.] Thank you also for the stated clerk and staff who make sure this meeting runs smoothly.

Thank you, God for a church structure in which no one is ever alone, in which every member affects every other member. May we each, may we all, use that ability to please you and make this Church what you want it to be.

And for any in this room who are not officially members of this congregation, may your Spirit move upon their hearts today, leading them to fully become part of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Everything belongs to God. In gratitude, we return to God a portion of the blessings given to us, joining our offerings of time, talents, and resources with the offerings of others to do more ministry than any of us can do alone. Some of what we give today supports the ministries of this congregation, some supports the ministries of our presbytery, and some supports the ministries of our denomination. As you give joyfully, know that what you give reaches far and wide.

Offertory Prayer

Loving God from whom all blessings flow, we thank you for this and for every opportunity to return to you a portion of the blessings you give us. Take what we offer you in this moment, bless it, and join it with the offerings of many others to accomplish more than any of us ever could alone, starting right here and reaching out into the world. Amen.

Charge

Be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble. That goes for all of you, no exceptions. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead, bless—that's your job, to bless. You'll be a blessing and also get a blessing.

1 Peter 3:8-9

Benediction

As we go from this safe place into the unsafe world,
may you leave different from how you arrived:
closer to God,
more appreciative of our denomination and its ministries,
and with the assurance
that as a Cumberland Presbyterian you are never alone. Amen.