Closing Worship for the Conference Annual Gathering
of the Missouri Mid-South Conference
Saturday, April 24, 2021
2:00 pm

Opening Music and Video of Our Ministry Together  Clair De Lune  Claude DeBussey

Call to Worship  MMSC Association Leaders
Jeff Remellius  Siblings in Christ, we complete our week-long Conference Annual Gathering with worship of God, our Creator.
Laura Migernone  Hear, O Missouri Mid-South Conference, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.
Jeanne Lischer  We listen to the voices of our 141 Churches expressing how God has led us through the global pandemics.
Jeff Remellius  We hear God calling us to pivot the Church from our comfortable liturgies to the unknown sounds of Emmanuel among us.
Laura Migernone  We give thanks for the many voices at our business meeting to ensure that God’s voice is reflected in our Unifying Call, Core Ministries, Bylaw revisions, outdoor ministries, and racial equity now.
Jeanne Lischer  Come, let us worship God with all of our heart, soul, and might as the Missouri Mid-South Conference.

Invocation  Traci Blackmon

Reading of the Hebrew Scriptures  Deuteronomy 6:4-9  Norma Klemme
Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Speaking the Missouri Mid-South Conference Unifying Call Together  Donna Smith-Pupillo
We are the United Church of Christ in Arkansas, Memphis and Missouri. United by Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, we support and empower one another in our unifying call to embody God’s love and mercy for all.

Offering  Nancy Litzinger
The offering for our closing worship will go to the Friends of the Missouri Mid-South Conference. You are invited to give by clicking on the link in the chat, going to our Conference webpage, or write a check and send it to the Conference Office. Your generosity enables us to support and empower our churches to Be the Church now!

Hymn of Peace  "It is Well With My Soul"

Prayers of Lament for the Pandemics of Covid-19 and White Supremacy
What one word do you bring with you today that reflects this past year of global pandemics? We invite you to share your word in the chat as our collective prayer of lament and assurance of healing together
O God of Suffering and Laments, in this past year, we have carried with us the deep joys and sorrows from our collective experiences through these global pandemics.

We give thanks that you never left us because you are our God, who carried our ancestors out of turmoil as they testified to your love, “It is well with our souls.”

We confess that we did not always feel well with our souls, but you were there so that we never had to journey these pandemics alone. Thank you.

And today, we release all of it to you as the Missouri Mid-South Conference so that you will heal us.

For the changes we made quickly in our churches, family, school, and professional lives that required tremendous energy and courage from us…

For the sacrifice of healthcare and grocery store workers, teachers and bus drivers, who braved dangerous conditions so that we could shelter at home…

For the masks and physical distance that protected us and the researchers who quickly developed a vaccination.

For proms and vacations cancelled and graduations and funerals with masks and socially distanced…

For the zoom backgrounds and mute buttons, ring lights and boom microphones that clarified our online worship presence…

For the elderly and disabled, abuse survivors and malnourished children for whom shelter meant loneliness, isolation, and fear…

For the families of George Floyd, Ma’Khia Bryant, Breanna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbury, and the 56 Trans and Gender Nonconforming images of God murdered by the evil of white supremacy…

For our complicity in and woundedness from our sin of white supremacy.

For the creativity of ministers and faithfulness of church members to embody the virtual Body of Christ…

For our Black Lives Matter signs and anti-racism book studies that have lead to protests, action and demands for racial equity now.

We release these words of lament and those in our chat as well as the silent ones you already know so that you can begin to heal us anew.

And all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all matters of things shall be well…for it is well with our soul. Amen.

My friends, may the peace of God, our Creator, bind up your deep personal wounds of dis-ease.

May the peace of Christ, which passes all understanding
Be with the Missouri Mid-South Conference in our collective healing.
And may the Holy Spirit, which makes all things new be with us globally in our healing. Amen.

Reading of the Christian Scripture  Galatians 3:26-29  Sonia Walker

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Hagar, Sarah, and Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Homily  “God Calls Us to Be Unifying Allies”  Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel

Installation of Conference Council Leaders and General Synod Delegates

Introduction
Ginny Brown Daniel  Affirmation of ministry is the act whereby we recognize the diverse gifts of our members and celebrate the particular ministry of each person in the life of the conference or in various settings in the life of the world.
Damien Lake  There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served.
Kathie Rainey  There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit gives them.
Nate Fulk  There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to each of us for our particular service.
Cindy Birkner  The Spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.
Julie Atkins  Christ is like a single body, which has many parts. It is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts.
Ginny Brown Daniel  If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.
Damien Lake  All of us are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it.

Presentation
Ginny  These people have been called by God, in accordance with the faith and order of our conference, to serve among us. They have accepted their call and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.

Covenant
Damien Lake  Siblings in Christ, it is an honor to be entrusted with responsibility for particular service in the ministry of the church, whether gathered or scattered. Having prayerfully considered the duties and responsibilities of your ministry, are you prepared to serve in your capacities, with the help of God in Christ’s name, for the glory of God? If so, please respond, “I am.”

Andrea Asselmeier  I am.
Kathie Rainey  Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ? If so, respond saying, “I do, relying on God’s grace.”
Andrea Asselmeier  I do, relying on God’s grace.

Congregational Response
Nate Fulk  All you gathered here, you have heard the promises of our siblings in Christ, who have answered God’s call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them. Please rise in body or spirit.

Cindy Birkner  We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you, that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.

Prayer
Damien Lake  Let us pray, Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in this conference and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit on them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties that your church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united Christ’s ministry, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Declaration
Ginny Brown Daniel  In the name of Jesus Christ and on behalf of the people of the Missouri Mid-South Conference, I rejoice to announce that you are installed and commissioned in your respective positions. And let us all say – Thanks be to God and Woohoo! 😊

Litany of Farewell and Release of Ministry

Greetings
Deb Blood  Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go.
Joyce Bathke  Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another.
Deb Blood  Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life.
Joyce Bathke  Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities.
Deb Blood  It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings.
Joyce Bathke  Today we share the time of farewell with Ginny as our Conference Minister as we complete our ministry together.

Recognition of the Completion of Ministry with the Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel
Bill Lyons  On December 1, 2015, the Missouri Mid-South Conference called the Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel to serve as its Conference Minister.
Ginny Brown Daniel  I thank the Missouri Mid-South Conference of the United Church of Christ, its churches, ministers, and members, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these past five years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.
Andrea Asselmeier  We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.
Ginny Brown Daniel  I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.
Vows of Release for the Missouri Mid-South Conference

Gordon Rankin  Do you, the members and friends of the Missouri Mid-South Conference, release the Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel from the duties as Conference Minister?

Andrea Asselmeier  We do, with the help of God.

Franz Rigert  Do you promise to honor the Release of Ministry Covenant between the Missouri Mid-South Conference and Ginny as you release Ginny as your Conference Minister?

Andrea Asselmeier  We do with the help of God.

Diane Weible  Do you offer your encouragement for her ministry as it unfolds in new ways?

Andrea Asselmeier  We do, with the help of God.

Vows of Release for the Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel

Bonnie Bates  Do you, Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, release the Missouri Mid-South Conference, from turning to you and depending on you?

Ginny Brown Daniel  I do, with the help of God.

David Ackerman  Do you promise to honor the Release of Ministry Covenant between the Missouri Mid-South Conference and yourself as you release the Missouri Mid-South Conference?

Andrea Asselmeier  We do with the help of God.

Freeman Palmer  Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here and on the relationship with another, who will come to serve?

Ginny Brown Daniel  I do, with the help of God.

Witness of the United Church of Christ

Edith Guffey  On behalf of the Council of Conference Ministers and the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The United Church of Christ holds each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service. Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Release of Ministry

Shari Prestemon

Release of Ministry Covenant with the Missouri Mid-South Conference and Ginny

❖ No intentional contact for two years with Ginny and members of the Missouri Mid-South Conference (lay and clergy). This includes calls, texts, visits, social outings, or special worship services.

❖ No contact between Ginny and Conference members on social media for two years. Ginny will unfriend all Conference-related members on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

❖ If Conference members and Ginny see each other in UCC gatherings, discussion cannot pertain to the Missouri Mid-South Conference.

❖ Ginny cannot provide pastoral calls, hospital calls, or counseling with Missouri Mid-South Conference members.

❖ Ginny cannot attend worship or officiate special services related to the Conference for at least two years.

❖ If a Conference member dies, Ginny cannot officiate a portion of the funeral or memorial service for two years. She may send a personal note of condolence but not pastoral in tone.

❖ If Ginny experiences an illness or death in her family, Conference members can only send a note of condolence for two years.

❖ After two years, Ginny will meet with the settled Conference Minister and discuss an acceptable relationship that is respectful of all.
Hymn of Parting  “In the Midst of New Dimensions”

Benediction  Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel

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Worship Leaders for Today’s Worship Service are:
Rev. David Ackerman, Conference Minister, Penn West Conference
Rev. Andrea Asselmeier, MMSC Conference Council Moderator
Julie Darnold Atkins, MMSC Communications Specialist
Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister, Northeast Conference
Joyce Bathke, MMSC Personnel Committee Chairperson
Cindy Birkner, MMSC Youth Ministry Coordinator
Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister, Justice and Local Church Ministries
Rev. Deb Blood, Transitional Conference Minister, Northern Plains Conference
Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Conference Minister, Missouri Mid-South Conference
Nate Fulk, Executive Director, Shannondale Outdoor Ministries
Dr. Edith Guffey, Conference Minister, Kansas-Oklahoma Conference
Norma Klemme, Member, Zion UCC, Union, MO
Rev. Damien Lake, MMSC Associate Conference Minister
Tammy Linningham, Member in Discernment, Peace Christian Church, UCC, Kansas City
Rev. Jeanne Lischer, Associate Moderator, Western Association Council
Nancy Litzinger, MMSC Conference Council Member
Rev. Dr. Bill Lyons, Conference Minister, Southwest Conference
Rev. Laura Mignerone, Moderator, Eastern Association Council
Keyson Morgan, High School Freshman, Member of Christ the King, UCC, Florissant, MO
Rev. Freeman Palmer, Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference
Rev. Shari Prestemon, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference
Rev. Gordon Rankin, Conference Minister, New Hampshire Conference
Kathie Rainey, MMSC Office Manager
Jeff Remellius, Moderator, St. Louis Association Council
Rev. Franz Rigert, Conference Minister, Wisconsin Conference
Rev. Donna Smith-Pupillo, Former Moderator, MMSC Conference Council
Rev. Rob Van Ess, MMSC Conference Council Member, Memphis, TN
Rev. Sonia Walker, Associate Pastor, First Congregational Church, UCC, Memphis, TN
Rev. Dr. Diane Weible, Conference Minister, Northern California Nevada Conference
Holy Trinity UCC Choir Members, Memphis, TN
The Oasis, UCC Choir, Jefferson City, MO