

2015 Conference Annual Gathering (CAG)

June 4-6, 2015

"Rebuild, Restore, Renew!"



The following was designed to share additional information about our upcoming CAG and to answer any questions if you are still undecided about attending. This year's gathering was planned to offer you the perfect blend of business, worship, renewal, vision and fellowship.

CAG FAQ's

How many delegates can my church send to CAG?

The information in our [Conference Bylaws](#) (pages 1-2) answers this question for you, and the Bylaws are always available on our website.

Isn't CAG normally the second week in June? Why are we meeting earlier?

The change in date is due to the availability at the Holiday Inn Executive Center, our new venue this year (see below). Several other events were already booked at the hotel the second week in June, so our gathering was moved up one week.

Where will CAG be held?

We have a new venue this year – [The Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia, MO](#). Long considered Columbia's go-to destination for large-scale meetings and conventions, the Holiday Inn Executive Center elevates warm mid-western hospitality to an art form. Featuring over 36,000 square feet of event space, three restaurants and bars, two swimming pools and Fitness and Business Centers. The Business Centers stay open 24 hours a day to accommodate any of those last minute business needs. This 310-room hotel charms business and leisure guests with its stylishly renovated guest rooms, luxurious suites, fully handicapped accessibility and top-notch service. [Facilities map of hotel](#).

Do I have to make my own hotel reservation?

YES! Please call the hotel directly to make your reservation. Phone: 573-445-8531. To make your room reservation online, please visit: <http://goo.gl/YsDbR2>.

What is the room cost?

The cost per night during CAG is \$99.95, plus tax.

What are the check-in and check-out times at The Holiday Inn?

Check-in is at 4:00 pm and check-out is at 11 am.

Will childcare be available this year?

Childcare and children's programming will be provided free of charge for children of all registered parents/guardians. Childcare = infants/toddlers/pre-schoolers up to age 4; Children's programming = children in kindergarten to 6th grade. This service will be available on the following days/times:

Thursday

- 9:45 am to 11:45 am (children must be picked up prior to all meals during CAG)
- 1:15 pm to 4:45 pm
- 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm – nursery care available at Columbia UCC during service only

Friday

- 8:45 am to 11:45 am
- 1:15 pm to 5:15 pm
- 7:15 pm to 8:45 pm

Saturday

- 8:45 am to 11:45 am

This information will be provided to all parents on a handout upon arrival at CAG, along with the names of the childcare providers and the specific area(s) designated for childcare. Bring the kids to CAG – they'll have a great time!

Is anything special being planned for the Youth?

As a reminder: All youth will be voting delegates or visitors from their local congregation. Supervision of all youth will be the responsibility of their host church delegates/pastors/visitors. (Each church is allowed one youth voting delegate). Now, onto the fun stuff for youth! There will be intentional youth programming Thursday and Friday nights from 10:00 pm-midnight. On Thursday the youth will enjoy a Mexican Fiesta (muy bueno) with mixer games and activities; Friday night will include a dance, pizza party and ice-cream social! All are invited, but these are just for you! And remember to bring your swimsuit... Marco.... Polo! [Youth flyer](#).

What's happening on Thursday?

At 8:00 am Doug Pagitt, Director of Inventive Initiatives with the Center for Progressive Renewal, will be hosting a session primarily geared toward our MMSUCC Church Vitality Covenanted Ministry Team, but all are welcome. Doug is a possibility enthusiast who seeks to find creative, entrepreneurial and generative ways to enlist people to join in the hopes, dreams and desires God has for the world. He is a speaker and consultant for churches, denominations and businesses throughout the United States and around the world on issues of Inventive Age culture, social systems Christianity and Leadership. Doug has worked in churches, for a non-profit foundation and has owned three businesses in Minneapolis. Doug will be with us again on Thursday at 1:30 pm.

At 10:00 am David Schoen will host "New Beginnings." David is with the Local Church Ministries UCC. David has served in ministry in local churches of large and small membership congregations in urban and suburban settings. Most recently Dave was involved in restructuring a congregation's organizational life for mission in the 21st century and creating a team ministry that engaged in planning new worship opportunities through contemporary technology, multi-cultural music and generational outreach. His presentation on Thursday, June 4 entitled, "Becoming a Missional Church in the Neighborhood." David will also tell us about an initiative called "New Beginnings," which is an assessment process designed to help congregations discern, discover and decide on a new mission. Our Conference has an upcoming event in the month of September which David will return to facilitate.

Then at 1:30 on Thursday, Doug Pagitt will present "Change Makers: Church in the Inventive Age." *We live in the midst of inescapable change. Maybe this thrills you. Maybe this scares you. Regardless, the changes happening right now in American society mean every cultural institution, every community, every individual has a choice to make: We can either be in on the change or we can be left behind.* According to Pagitt, the last two centuries can be divided into four epochs: Idyllic, Industrial, Informational and now-Inventive. The Inventive Age - our currently reality - presents distinct opportunities for how faith

communities think, what they value, and the tools they use. Pagitt offers leaders in Christian communities (and beyond) essential frameworks for participation in the Inventive Age.

Will we be updated on the Vision Team's progress?

On Thursday at 5:00 pm, our Conference consultant, Dr. Dick Hamm, will present the strategic plan for the re-envisioned Missouri Mid-South Conference. This presentation will answer many of the “how” and “who” questions that are implied by the [Future Story video](#) (please click on the link and view that video before you arrive, if at all possible). Dick will cover the foundational building blocks of the new “network” model that will reconnect congregations, ministers and lay leaders with each other across the life of the Conference. Your response, questions, and feedback will be sought, so please join us!

Are we worshipping on Thursday night?

Yes! After dinner on Thursday at the hotel, we will gather at [Columbia UCC](#) for opening worship beginning at 7:30 pm. Folks can carpool from the hotel; the church is just a short distance across the highway from the Holiday Inn. We're very fortunate to have a UCC church so close to the hotel this year.

What's going on after worship?

After worship a reception will be held at Columbia UCC where light refreshments will be served. Please join us for fellowship and fun! And thanks in advance to Columbia UCC for their welcoming spirit and wonderful hospitality! After worship and fellowship, it's back to the hotel for either more fellowship (libations available!) or time to hit the hay!

When will Conference business be discussed?

The first business session is Friday, June 5, 9-10:30 am. The second business session is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 9-11:45 am. During these times we will hear the Treasurer's report, vote on the 2016 budget, receive updates about our Conference and the search for our new Conference Minister, discover more about the Vision Team, engage in speak outs, and much more. This is the only time of year we gather as The Conference to learn what has been accomplished and where we are heading. Don't miss either session! Lunch and closing worship to follow.

Who's leading Bible study?

Bible study will be held on Friday at 8:30 am and again on Saturday at the same time. Our Bible study leaders are from our own Conference: Rev. Dr. Mike Bone, Sr. Pastor at Zion UCC in Union, and Rev. Dr. Vernon Howard, Jr., newly installed Pastor at St. Mark Union Church UCC in Kansas City.

Bible study title: "The Church Anointed: Bringing Righteousness/Justice to the City"

This study will frame the work of righteousness/justice in biblical terms utilizing Isaiah 61-1-4 as textual foundation. The text identifies the "city" as the appointed place of the anointed sent to fulfill very clear and precise purposes of the Sovereign Lord.

Session I – Friday, 8:30 am

Focuses upon the prophet's address to a people traumatized by what they've come home to. Like modern day refugees allowed to return, they rejoice to see the place that shaped them, but are shocked by how much it - and they - are changed. Overwhelmed and in mourning, the word of the Lord comes to them that God will rebuild and renew both their space and their spirit.

Session II – Saturday, 8:30 am

Identifies ministry praxis possibilities taken from the vernacular of the prophet that the UCC, under the anointing, across our connection and settings, might enact en route to bring righteousness/justice. Three key issues of justice, peace, and reconciliation prevalent in our current "city" are identified and examined including:

1. Economic Inequality
2. Violence/Brutality
3. Racial and Religious Reconciliation

What workshops are available this year?

Three workshops will be held on Friday after lunch, beginning at 1:30. The workshops will focus and explore racial reconciliation and how we see (or don't see) each other as individuals. The workshops/leaders are:

- Leah Gunning Frances
- "African American Voices From Around the Conference"
- Leon Sharpe

We will have further information on workshops upon your arrival at CAG.

Who is our keynote speaker?

Our Conference is honored to present Bishop Yvette Flunder as our keynote speaker. She will give her keynote address on Friday at 10:45 am, and will then lead worship that same evening at 7:30 pm. Bishop Flunder is a native San Franciscan and third generation preacher with roots in the Church of God in Christ. Bishop Flunder is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and holds both masters and doctorate degrees in Ministry from the Pacific School of Religion and the San Francisco Theological Seminary, respectively. In 2003, she was appointed Presiding Bishop of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, a multi-denominational coalition of over 56 churches and faith-based organizations from all over the world.

Bishop Flunder is a trustee and adjunct professor at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. She is an active voice for the Religion Council of the Human Rights Campaign, as well as for the National Black Justice Coalition. Bishop Flunder is a highly sought after preacher and religious educator as evidenced by her having spoken at divinity schools nationwide including those at Duke, Yale, Drew, and the New York Theological Seminary. She is the author of *Where the Edge Gathers: A Theology of Homiletic Radical Inclusion*, published by Pilgrim Press. In addition to her memorable sermons, Bishop Flunder is also known for her beautiful singing voice, made famous through her gospel recordings with Walter Hawkins and the Family, the City of Refuge Choir and Chanticleer. Learn more about her church, [City of Refuge UCC](#).

When are the clergy and church anniversaries being recognized?

These celebrations will occur on Friday night during dinner, which begins at 6 pm. We have four 50-year honored statespersons who will be recognized from our Conference, in addition to 3 churches celebrating significant anniversaries. You can find more information on the clergy and church recognitions on the [2015 CAG page of our website](#).

What type of music is being planned?

Music is always an essential ingredient for our Conference events. This year we are pleased to have Mr. Paul Westcott join us as our Music Director, who was with us two years ago at Drury University. Paul has been working with our CAG planning team to specifically pair music to complement each day's different events. So get ready for some uplifting, spiritual hymns showcasing our theme, "Rebuild, Restore and Renew". During opening worship on Thursday at Columbia UCC, we will be treated to the musical gifts of Mary Bracke and the talented folks at the church. We are also fortunate to have with us this year, soloist, Mrs. Karen Fulks.

Will there be a Conference Choir this year?

Yes! There's nothing like music to bring us all together, and it's so inspiring to hear the talented voices in our Conference blend as one. Our CAG Music Director, Paul Westcott, will be directing the Conference Choir. The choir will be singing 2 anthems which can be listened to at www.stantons.com. Click on the Listening Library and in the search box (upper right portion of the page) type in the catalog number. For "Lord, Lift Me Up" by Mary McDonald... #10/4556L, and for "Precious Lord with Lead Me, Guide Me"... #34856. Twenty copies of the music were ordered and can be picked up before CAG at the Conference office, but please call before you visit to ensure the music has been delivered. Choir practice will be held on Friday at 4:00 pm. Raise your voice and sing - the more the merrier!

Can my organization display information as a table vendor at CAG?

Of course! If your group, agency or organization would like to join our vendors, please contact Renee at the Conference office by May 27 and she'll get you all the information you need.

What meals will be served at the Holiday Inn?

Thursday – plated dinner.

Friday – breakfast buffet, lunch buffet, plated dinner.

Saturday – breakfast buffet (subsidized by Cornerstone and United Church Funds), lunch buffet.

All of the above meals are included with the \$175 registration option. Be sure to tell us on your registration form if you are vegetarian, gluten-free, any allergies, etc.

Will the CAG materials be posted on the website again this year?

Yes. Many of the reports, financial documents and anniversary information are already available for viewing/printing. If you're not going to bring a laptop or tablet to CAG, we highly encourage you to print out the materials and put them into a binder. The hotel does have WiFi.

We truly hope you will join us for this year's Conference Annual Gathering. If we've failed to answer a question, please contact [Dale Parson](#) or [Renee Cordes](#). Thanks and we'll see you in Columbia!