“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

As I sit at my desk preparing to write this report I am amazed that so much has transpired in the life of our beloved Missouri Mid-South Conference in just one year. This has not happened with the actions of just a few but with the love and efforts of many (lay and pastors) who feel they are called in various settings (conference, association, local church) to step up and be in covenant with one another.

Our biggest highlight of the year was the unanimous approval of Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel as our our new Conference Minister on November 14. She is getting to know the highways and back roads of the Conference well. We are blessed to have her and are grateful for the hard work and perseverance of the Conference Minister Search team.

After the approval of the Strategic Plan at the Conference Annual Gathering, the Vision Implementation Team began its work in planning the first Conference Planning Event last November. Based on the input provided at this event, the team provided a report that was shared with the Conference Council and Covenanted Ministries with suggestions/guidance to assist in planning and setting priorities for the year. This document is continually being utilized to ensure we are staying focused on the strategic work that needs to be done. The next Conference Annual Planning Event is scheduled for September 10 at Columbia U.C.C.

This year we are happy to report that the sale of the carbon credits from the Shannondale Tree Farm has finally come to fruition. Thanks to Jeff Fulk and the Shannondale Carbon LLC Covenanted Ministry for their leadership in this endeavor.

The council continues to conduct much of its business through four (4) standing committees:

- **Leadership & Development (Laura Dierberg Ayers, Chair).** This Committee is responsible for providing our annual slate of nominations for the Conference Council, General Synod delegates, special task groups and committees. This is an intense responsibility and they are always striving to create a balance of skill sets, diversity, and association representation.

- **Finance & Administration (Carl Phillips, Chair)** A priority of this Committee is to prepare the annual budget working with our Treasurer, Ken Ulmer. Last year our conference, for the first time in 13 years, is financially in the black. This is due to the hard work of many. Our Treasurer and Finance and Administration Committee have worked very hard to keep the Council aware of where we are each month. In addition to the budgeting, this team also prepares various policies and procedures as needed.

- **Local Church Ministries (Bruce Moeller, Chair)** This committee coordinates and oversees the Covenanted Local Church Ministries of the Conferences and reports back to the Council with updates and/or the need for the council to develop new
ministries based on the needs of the Conference. Just this April we approved a Covenanted Ministry for Older Adults.

- Wider Church Ministries (Bill Seymour, Chair) This committee coordinates and oversees the Covenanted Wider Church Ministries of the Conference and reports back to the Council with updates and/or the need for the council to develop new ministries based on the needs of the conference.

Outdoor Ministries continue to be an integral part of our mission. Thanks to the leadership of Jeremy Force, Jeff Fulk, and their Covenanted Ministries leadership for the wonderful work that continues to be done to serve our church membership and community members.

We are very pleased with the work being done by all of our Covenanted Ministries. Each year your council reviews each to determine effectiveness; changes needed, and also determine the need for others as part of our annual strategic plan. Your input and feedback is important in this process.

I would like to take this time to publicly express my gratitude to our acting Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Allen Fluent, who faithfully served our conference during the past 2 years. Thank you, Allen for your leadership during this time of uncertainty.

In addition, I want to express my thanks to our Associate Conference Minister, Dale Parson, and the Conference Office staff (Renee Cordes, Lorraine Brooks, and Kris Scott) and to each member of this year’s Conference Council. The work of the conference could not be done without their hard work and support.

I would be remiss if I did not express my sincere appreciation of the steadfast support of the Conference Executive Committee:

- Rev. Dr. David Mehl, Vice Moderator
- Dr. Linda Stenger, Secretary
- Rev Ken Ulmer, Treasurer
- Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel Conference Minister (Ex-Officio)

It has been a wonderful opportunity for me to have them as a part of the team.

And last, but not least, thanks to the 2016 Conference Annual Gathering Planning Team for all the hard work that has been done to hopefully provide each member attending a feeling of covenant and commitment to God and each other as we move forward in 2016.

God’s Blessings to each of you.

Joyce Bathke
Conference Moderator