

Rob Van Ess 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.

Tammy Linningham **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.”**

Rob Van Ess 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.

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

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

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

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

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

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

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

Rob Van Ess For proms and vacations cancelled and graduations and funerals with masks and socially distanced...

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

Rob Van Ess For the zoom backgrounds and mute buttons, ring lights and boom microphones that clarified our online worship presence...

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

Rob Van Ess For the elderly and disabled, abuse survivors and malnourished children for whom shelter meant loneliness, isolation, and fear...

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

Rob Van Ess For the families of George Floyd, Ma’Khia Bryant, Breanna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbury, and the 56 Trans and Gender Nonconforming images of God¹ murdered by the evil of white supremacy...

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

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

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

Rob Van Ess For the creativity of ministers and faithfulness of church members to embody the virtual Body of Christ...

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

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

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

Rob Van Ess For the technology glitches and patient grace that expanded within us...

Tammy Linningham **It is well with our souls.**

Rob Van Ess 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.

Tammy Linningham **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.**

Assurance of Healing

Keyshon Morgan

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

¹ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/fatal-violence-against-the-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-community-in-2021>

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