



## Missouri Mid-South Conference United Church of Christ

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### **2019 Conference Minister's Report: "Building Courageous Relationships!"**

#### **Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel**

Our Conference Ministry theme for 2018-2019 was, "Building Courageous Relationships!" As your Conference Minister, I and your Conference Ministry Staff have equipped Churches, Ministers, and Members to be Building Courageous Relationships in the following places:

- Worship Services Attended/Preached 93 Churches (39 Ginny/54 Other Conference Staff)
- Ordinations 9 Ordinations (2 EA, 6 STL and 1 WA)
- Installations 10 Installations (2 EA, 6 STL, and 2 WA)
- Church Starts 1 Church Start – The Oasis, Jefferson City (1WA)
- Fitness Reviews 3 Fitness Reviews (3 WA)
- Association Meetings Attended 6 Association fall and spring meetings
- Training Events 6 Boundary Awareness Training (2 EA, 2 STL, 2 WA)
- Retreats Led or Attended 11 Retreats Led by Conference Staff (\*2 new)
  - Conference Council, Women, Men, Persons in Ministry, Committee on Ministry, Middle School, Senior High, Confirmation\*, Youth Leader\*
- Ecourier and Bereavement MMS Emails 61 Email Communications
- Facebook Users 1,877 Users
  - Users include any content from MMS page enter their screen through unpaid distribution
- Likes to MMS Page Posts 24 new likes (Data gathered since 1/22/19)

I have had the honor to equip the Missouri Mid-South Conference Churches to be Building Courageous Relationships in the following areas:

- **Personnel and Administrative Leadership: Strong and Healthy Staff**
  - After a year of transition, 2018-2019 has provided a time for the Conference staff to build relationships together as well as develop relationships throughout the Conference. I continue to be impressed with how we collaborate together to tackle a challenge or provide resources to our local Churches, Associations, and Conference. We seek to streamline processes that have been ambiguous in the past in order to provide consistent support to all whom we serve. Our temporary Youth Coordinators have provided excellent ministry to our Churches and cluster areas of the Conference. They offered a different face of the Conference, which has built relationships with strength and support.
- **Governance Leadership: Healthy Conference Council**
  - The Conference Council continues to develop a healthy governance model for the Conference, updating needed policies, creating an internal audit review, and maintaining our financial health for the Conference. They also continually ask strategic questions in their meetings to ensure our staff, finances, ministry teams, and governance align with the mission of the Missouri Mid-South Conference today. This has led to our current strategic initiative, which will then inform the work of our Associate Conference Minister Search Committee.
- **Two Strong Open and Affirming Convocations**
  - Our Conference is so fortunate to have the Gateway ONA and Heartland ONA Convocations! Not only do they provide annual gatherings and represent the UCC at their respective Pride Festivals, they provide support and resources to our local Churches and Ministers considering or currently going through the Open and Affirming process! Woohoo!

## Challenges That Continue to Face the Missouri Mid-South Conference:

- **Racial Justice and Equity Training (RJE)**
  - Our Committees on Ministry have been discerning how to develop and provide RJE training. Thank you! However, this task can become very daunting in the midst of the workload of our COMs. Leon Sharpe and Jane Fisler Hoffman have offered to work with each of our COMs to develop substantive training opportunities (or partner with area organizations currently accomplishing this training) using the 4 criteria established in 2018.
- **Two Current Cases of Steeplejacking**
  - In 2019, two of our Churches have experienced individuals from outside the UCC contacting local church members unhappy with the UCC. These are the same individuals identified in the book, “Steeplejacking.” I have been extremely impressed with members and ministers throughout the Conference standing firm that, although we may not always agree with everything in the denomination, we are the United Church of Christ. Thanks be to God!
- **Cultivating Financial Generosity**
  - I have been remiss to cultivate donor-based generosity via Friends of the Conference in 2018-2019. We are financially stable but could be stronger.

## Wider Church Events I Attended or Led This Past Year:

- Keynote Presentation at Ecumenical Stewardship Center entitled, “Asking for Checks in a Venmo World: A Minister’s Guide to Generosity!” May 1, 2019
- Emergency Conference Minister Consultant for the Southeast Conference Aug.-Dec., 2019
- President of the West Central Region of Conferences 2018-2019
- Cabinet of the Council for Conference Ministers 2018-2019
- Board of Directors, Cornerstone Fund 2018-2019

## Update on Past Conference Annual Gathering Visions of the Conference Minister:

- **2017 Vision: Consider Becoming a Open and Affirming Conference**
  - The Conference Council approved a Task Force to be created. They are currently putting together a cohesive plan to invite book studies, prayer, town hall discussions, and many opportunities for the Holy Spirit to guide us in this conversation.
- **2018 Vision #1: Develop 3 New Church Starts in the Conference by 2020!**
  - We have one new church start since our 2018 CAG: The Oasis UCC in Jefferson City. We currently have 3 “Incubator Churches,” which are the seedlings for Church Starts within current Church ministries but haven’t been formally approved as Church Starts yet.
- **2018 Vision #2: Double 2030 Clergy in the Conference by 2020!**
  - Last year, we recorded 15 Authorized Ministers under 40 years old, none were Ministers of Color. To date, we have 22 Authorized Ministers under 40 years old; still none of whom are Ministers of Color. We are about halfway to our goal of 30 under 40 clergy by 2020. And we have made no ground on Ministers of Color under 40. This figure is a moving target as people “age out” of this group as well as Ministers transfer to other Conferences. Still, this is an important mile marker as we develop a supportive environment for Authorized Ministers under 40. Tyler and I have been meeting with all of the Authorized Ministers under 40 years old since our 2018 CAG.
  - We still have much work to do to support to provide a supportive environment for Ministers of Color under 40 years old. This will require stronger Racial Justice and Equity Training requirements and local Churches to be courageous enough to do our own work on racial bias and white privilege.

I continue to be amazed at the ways God has been Building Courageous Relationships throughout the Missouri Mid-South Conference! Thank you for an exceptional year of ministry together! Blessings, Ginny