

June 10, 2017

Dear Members and Friends of the Missouri Mid-South Conference:

When I began planning my sabbatical last year, I used as a framing theme ***The Third-Third of My Life***. This phrase comes from the UCC Pension Boards retirement seminar in which participants are encouraged to think about “the third-third of life.” I realized then—as I do now—that it was important to ponder how to invest in the third-third: work commitments, family priorities, focus on health, and engaging in experiences that add value and meaning to one’s life.

I have been led in recent weeks and months to a growing awareness that it is time for me to retire – although I really don’t fully understand what that means! It is both exhilarating and a little frightening to come to this place of discernment.

In July 1996, I began my ministry as Associate Conference Minister of the Missouri Conference (now the Missouri Mid-South Conference.) My call was extended by the Conference and it has been an immensely rich and rewarding (and sometimes, challenging!) ministry for the past twenty-one years. During this time, I have had opportunity to serve with three called Conference Ministers, three interim Conference Ministers and at least eight Associate Conference Ministers (called and transitional). In addition, there have been three directors of outdoor ministries and at least fifteen support staff!

I am deeply and humbly grateful for this opportunity to serve with you in the life of the Conference! There have been so many “seasons” in our life together—seasons of change and challenge, seasons of celebration and joy, seasons of disappointment and loss. It is true: ***“For everything there is a season.”***

And this is the season for me to take my leave and say farewell. My call agreement includes a 90-day time of notification. Leaders of the Conference will discuss with me these days of closure and leave-taking.

It is certainly my intention to engage fully in those ministries with which I have been entrusted, to remember and celebrate significant relationships and to help prepare the way for my successor(s).

You have become part of the fabric of my life and ministry. I am grateful. I have been honored to serve among and with you. I am blessed and shall carry that blessing with me. Always.

Blessings & Peace,

Rev. F. Dale Parson

Associate Conference Minister

Copy: Rev. Dr. David Mehl, Moderator

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Conference Minister