

**Connectional Ministries Table**  
**Debra (Deb) Payne**  
**NOW Coordinator and CMT Chair**

Greetings from the Connectional Ministries Table!

It has been a year since I stood before you as your new NOW Coordinator and chair of the Connectional Ministries Table (CMT) at our 2005 Annual Conference. Since that time, we have met three times as a team to work through numerous pieces of business: twice on Friday evenings before our Convocations and then again via conference call in May. During these sessions, we've managed to work through some detailed changes for our conference rules which you have before you this year for your consideration as well as budget preparation and concerns about vacancies on some of the teams.

But, it wasn't all business drudgery! We also established a new "Faith Grant" that will allow for funding of some special projects or ministries. We are very excited about the opportunity to be able to consider events or ministries without having to focus on the cost first, but rather focus on "boldly making disciples of Jesus Christ." That's not to say that the fund is limitless (far from it), but it's exciting to think about doing something new to reach out to new disciples and having the funds to do so. The Faith Grant process is in its infancy, but as we work out the kinks, we'll be sure you can find information about it on the website: [www.umi.org](http://www.umi.org).

We held two Convocations (Fall and Spring) this year which allowed for all of the ministries teams that fall into the world of the Connectional Ministries Table to meet for a day to gain synergy across the teams, break into separate ministries for planning, and to worship together as one body. Both days allowed for face-to-face meetings not only for the individual ministry teams, but also between the teams allowing for groups to spend time together working to cross-plan. Some great work comes out of these teams and the work they do. Be sure to read their reports to catch up on the great stuff that is being done in our conference!

I'd also like to take a moment in this report to offer some thanks. The first is to the Bishop and the leadership team for giving me the time I needed to observe the operations of our church at the conference level. Working outside the local church is new to me, and I must say a bit intimidating. But the CLT has made it easy to live in a learning environment. I also want to thank Turella Woods for her support and willingness to answer question after question, to put up with my lack of knowledge, and to help out with any task that needed attention. But, most of all, I want to thank Scott Harkness for his calming attitude behind our work, his professionalism, his understanding of my many other commitments, and his willingness to lead me through the maze of our ministry. He is a kind and calming soul, and I can't thank him enough for his patience this past year. I'm also thrilled to share with you that the CMT unanimously voted to recommend to the Bishop that Scott be appointed as our Director of Connectional Ministries.

As we look forward to the next year, I'm ready to meet the challenges of our ministries together. As we plan for our work, I am excited about the Bishop's Initiative on the Elimination of Hunger in our annual conference and the focus it will offer to us. Consider all the good works we can manage together focusing on the plight of hunger in our two states. Consider all of the people we can help by filling their stomachs with nourishment and filling their hearts with the love of God. What better way to reach out and boldly make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!