

## THE CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

The Council on Connectional Ministries is being intentional about its role of implementing our vision and purpose by following a process that focuses exclusively on mobilizing all resources of the conference to equip congregations to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

We have in place Guidelines for chairpersons that include their responsibilities such as: timeline for meetings; required meetings; responsibilities of chairperson; the basic responsibility of the board or agency; relationship with connectional ministry staff; funding cycle and some basic tips on how to run a meeting. This document was designed by several congregational specialists and presented as a training tool with chairpersons at the organizational meeting for boards and agencies.

Chairpersons are to complete grant requests forms by answering the following questions: Why is this program necessary? How does this program strengthen local United Methodist congregations? How does this program enhance the connectional bonds of the United Methodist Church? And what will take place if this program is successfully completed? These forms can be completed on line and submitted to the Grant Funding Committee for approval, then recommended to connectional ministries for approval.

Evaluation forms are placed on line for all chairpersons to evaluate programs that were implemented. The Grant Funding Committee will use these evaluations to help determine the effectiveness of programs in meeting the needs of congregations.

Our Congregational Specialists have been and are very busy as they strive to complete the many requests they are receiving from local churches for assistance. Most specialists have scheduled appointments months in advance and over the last two years they have had contact with more than 50% of our congregations. This is an indication that our churches are very receptive to our willingness to listen to their needs and provide needed assistance.

The 2008 session of the Annual Conference approved the request made by the African American Committee for a full time Congregational Specialists for African American Ministries. As a result of this action Rev. Ken Nelson has been appointed to this new position. Cathy Joens has been hired as a new Congregational Specialist.

As we continue to redirect our emphasis to equip local churches we move to become more effective in connecting local churches to ministries beyond themselves.

*Earline Haywood Ulmer, Chairperson*