

THE UNITED METHODIST RURAL FELLOWSHIP

The United Methodist Rural Fellowship is a national voluntary group within the United Methodist Church composed of lay and clergy persons who share a common concern for the Christian message as it engages issues of town and country churches and communities. [Town and Country as defined by *The Discipline*, are areas which have less than 50,000 population.]

The United Methodist Rural Fellowship believes that God works through people, churches and communities regardless of size or setting, to the end that they may participate in the Kingdom of God. UMRF works to build a positive image of the small membership church and the town and country church.

The United Methodist Rural Fellowship [UMRF] was born in 1940 at the site of the 1940 General Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey out of a sense of the need for town and rural people and churches to work together to achieve common goals. UMRF focuses on the following tasks.

General Conference legislation - an intentional process of preparing petition / resolutions concerning Town and Country Ministry and enabling their passage through General Conference.

Supportive Fellowship and Training - equipping styles of ministerial leadership.

Printing / Publishing - the quarterly UMRF BULLETIN, and other rural church resources.

Advocacy - monitoring the response of the total church to rural issues and needs and the Small Membership Church.

Internationalizing The Rural Experience - building bridges between rural churches. You will work with others for justice, stewardship and empowerment.

AN INVITATION

You are invited to become a part of this vital fellowship by becoming a member of the Oklahoma Conference chapter of the United Methodist Rural Fellowship. Your membership may include membership in the national United Methodist Rural Fellowship and subscriptions to the Oklahoma UMRF newsletter and the national UMRF BULLETIN.

WHY BELONG?

BECAUSE: The United Methodist Rural Fellowship is the only group in the United Methodist church that focuses on town and country and small membership ministry.

BECAUSE: approximately 88 percent of all United Methodist Churches are in town and country areas and nearly 73 percent of all United Methodist members belong in town and rural churches including ethnic minority ones.

BECAUSE: of the need to strengthen the quality of leadership and facilities for rural churches including ethnic minority ones.

BECAUSE: of the need to assimilate clergy women and clergy couples into town and country styles of ministerial leadership.

BECAUSE: approximately 64 percent of all United Methodist Churches [almost 25,000 local congregations, most of which are in town and country areas] have fewer than 200 members.

BECAUSE: your voice will be added to those who understand the gift and responsibilities of good earth; you will stand with those who know the value of town/rural churches.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enter my membership in the United Methodist Rural Fellowship. Each membership includes your membership and subscription to the UMRF Bulletin.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ + _____

HOME PHONE _____

WORK PHONE _____

CELL PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Lay _____ Clergy _____

Student Membership _____ **\$10.00**

Indiv. Membership _____ **\$30.00**

Church Membership _____ **\$40.00**
(copying rights included)

Prices reflect both national and local dues.

Please indicate your membership preference, make your check payable to UMRF Membership, and mail to:

Rev David Karges, Treasurer
P. O. Box 380
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Karges.djk@cox.net

OKLAHOMA OFFICERS

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Gary Moody

THE VISION

We are a land where every Christian congregation, regardless of the size of its membership or the grandeur of its buildings, is regarded as an authentic Body of the Lord Jesus Christ and is treated as a treasure in the assets of the Kingdom of God.

... where every member of every congregation is recognized and respected as a minister of the church and is trained and equipped to pour out his or her gifts in the building of the Kingdom where they are.

... where pastoral leadership is appointed to a community because of the unique gifts and graces that person possesses are needed there at that moment in God's history, and where all receive adequate and similar financial, spiritual and moral support to uphold them in their ministry.

... where all the needs of all the people of all the community become the concern of the Church and the context of its ministry. It is a land where every human being within the community is a recipient of the love, care and prayers of the congregations that ministered there. No one, none, is beneath, above or beyond the sphere of that love.

... where the goal of the Church is to work with God to create within its community the Ashalom^o of the Old Testament dream - the Kingdom of God in the vision of Jesus.

... where the Church lives out the command of Jesus to Go into all the world^o and the concept of John Wesley that indeed the >world is our parish.=

-by Mel West



**You are invited
to
join the**

**Oklahoma
United Methodist
Rural Fellowship**