

**Statement of Values / Strategies / Objectives**  
**For United Methodist Rural Advocates at General Conference**  
Updated at UMRA LC 2014 – Working Document Version 1

**Values**

- 1) The health, vitality, and sustainability of each local congregation should be held as the primary value of the denominational structure.
- 2) The global nature of the church must be recognized and **mutually** respected.
- 3) We affirm the value of rural communities as a context for mission, ministry, and the making of new disciples for Christ.
- 4) We hold in high value the welfare of rural people worldwide, including access to adequate food, shelter, medical care, clear water, education, spiritual care, economic development, and systems of justice.
- 5) We are called to be faithful stewards of creation; environment, ecologies, and resources.
- 6) God's call to ministry should be a foundational consideration for all Christians, lay and clergy.
- 7) Regarding **congregational life**, we value:
  - Pastoral leadership
  - The accessibility of sacraments
  - The mutuality of ministries, lay and clergy
  - Partnerships across ecumenical boundaries
- 11) We stand against the structured inequities of racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and similar forms of discrimination.
12. Money is not God!
13. We value partnerships with others of common cause, including the ecumenical community, in the work of making disciples for Jesus Christ.

14. We do not require agreement **on all things** to work together, whether within denominational processes, or with the poor, or for the transformation of our communities.
15. We value our partnership with people of differing opinions and of various faiths and with non-profits who do good and love justice.

### **Strategies**

1. Appropriate leadership and resources are provided to rural congregations.
2. Person are trained and equipped for specific ministry setting.
3. Longer tenure for pastors in effective ministries
4. Varieties of pastoral **leadership**: Certified Lay Ministers, Licensed (full and part-time), Ordained Deacons and Elders, Associate Members, Church and Community Workers, missionaries, etc.
5. Legislative changes should: first, do no harm. Second, do all the good possible for the local church.
6. We call this session of General Conference to be aware that in seeking institutional security, we may be acting in ways that betray our idolatry of financial goals and worldly status.

### **Outcomes**

1. Healthy local churches make new disciples for Christ and **transform** the world.
2. Appropriate and effective pastoral leadership.
3. Consistency across the connection regarding standards, assessment, and judicatory intervention into ministries and local congregations
4. Assessments (metrics) applied to local churches and/or their leadership shall consider the demographic and contextual realities of ministry in that community and be fair to both large and small membership churches.
5. Local Church vitality is to be measured by growth in individual discipleship, its collective witness, and its transformative relationship to its community.