



The United Methodist Rural Fellowship
(Soon to be U. M. R. Advocates)
Bulletin

Strong Rural Churches Build Strong Rural Communities!

Volume LXIII

Website: www.umrf.org

Tampa, Florida

Friday, May 4, 2012

What's in a Name?

by Ed Kail, senior correspondent



The United Methodist Rural Fellowship is about to take a different name. At the end of this General Conference, we will become United Methodist Rural Advocates. Well might you ask, "What's with the name change?"

UMRF was formed in 1940 as an independent "official caucus" of the Methodist Church, and has functioned as such in the United Methodist Church since 1968. It was very natural to gather as a "fellowship" of like-minded folks bonded together by context and experience. UMRF has functioned very much like a small-membership church, a "relational organism", or what Carl Dudley once called "a prickly ball of love". We have been a "high-context" culture, such that simply reconnecting with each other is a major component of any business agenda. We need to know what has been going on with each other since we last were together.

clearly education and advocacy around needs and issues of rural congregations, communities and people. In recent decades, the work of advocacy in the midst of denominational and organizational change has consistently come to the fore. We are committed to being a voice for the voiceless ones of town and country communities. Like the "Who's of Whoville" in the Dr. Seuss story, our task is to stand up and say, "We are here! We are here!"

Also, we are committed to the mission of the UMC, and to the revitalization of congregations in every possible place. We are not content to settle for mere maintenance or survival (though sometimes simply surviving is a tremendous victory). No, we will advocate with and among our people for engagement with the community, for life transformation including the church, and for faithful stewardship of life and environment everywhere.

The purpose for our fellowship, however, was

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Hospitality Center

Contact Info: 740-707-2901

Hours: 7 AM to 7 PM

(fellowship, light meals, snacks)

Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel

200 North Ashley Drive

Visit our website: www.umrf.org

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Konica Minolta is pleased to provide the printing capabilities for the United Methodist Rural Fellowship at General Conference.

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And so, we voted to embrace advocacy by changing our name to United Methodist Rural Advocates. As with any change, it may take us a while to live totally into our language, but we are earnest about our focus. Speaking for and to rural churches, we intend to stir up everyone to faith and good works for the sake of our common mission. If that is where your heart lies, join us!

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Country Humor

If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in the dark with a mosquito.

The "Opener" refers to the first day of hunting season. It's a "religious" holiday. You can get breakfast at the church.

Many Thanks

--to those who stopped to visit our hospitality suite and/or office;

--to those delegates who voted for our legislation;

--to those who have been willing to talk and hear even if they did not agree;

--to those who contributed to and received our daily Bulletin with a smile;

--to those volunteers who have given their time and expertise during these two weeks;

--to those who have contributed financially to our presence here;

--to those who have supported us in prayer and spirit;

--to those who planned and organized far in advance so things would run smoothly;

--to those behind the scenes: hospitality staff, office staff, and the UMRF Executive Committee;

--to those who have prepared meals, distributed bulletins, monitored legislation, transported people, run errands, worked late, and risen early!

