Did you know?

- Many rural churches cannot afford their own fulltime pastor, and must share resources.
- 80% of the population lives within less than 5% of the United States, which means the rural population is spread out across 95% of the U.S.
- Having a smaller membership church does not diminish the capacity of that church to minister to the needs within its community

United Methodist Rural Advocates Memberships

Do you have a heart for rural ministries? Would you help be a voice for rural churches by becoming a member?

Student	$ 10.00
Basic one-year	$ 50.00
Church one-year	$ 50.00
Sustaining Member...	$ 25.00 per month
Advocate……	$ 250.00 per year
Limited Income ……What you can afford	

By Pay Pal **www.umruraladvocates.com**

By Mail: Send check payable to "UMRA"

c/o Sue Grace, Membership Chair
2755 Independence Court
Grove City, OH 43123

Please include your name, contact information including your postal address, email address and the name of the Annual Conference where you reside.

UMRA advocates for denominational polity changes that help pastors, laity, and churches in rural, town and country areas more effectively minister to their communities.

UMRA continues to:

Seek to advance the Kingdom of God through faithfulness to scripture and the spreading of the gospel.

Propose legislative changes at General Conference that give value to pastors of small congregations and affect the roles of rural church leaders.

At the Annual, Jurisdictional, and General Conference levels, seek to address issues that affect rural, town and country ministry.

Provide a limited number of grants to local churches, pastors, and laity for innovative ministries.

Offer a bi-monthly e-newsletter to lift up the people, communities, and churches across rural America.

Provide a limited number of scholarships to assist in training rural pastors, laity, and leadership.

The United Methodist Rural Advocates
is a United Methodist lay and clergy association that deals directly with issues that relate to rural small membership churches, communities, and pastors.

OUR PURPOSE
To be a network that advocates, educates, inspires, and affirms rural and small membership churches, rural communities, and the entire United Methodist Church. We are a voice at General Conference that proposes legislative changes which assist rural churches and communities minister effectively for the Kingdom of God.

CONNECT WITH UMRA
www.umruraladvocates.com

Grace & peace in the name of Jesus Christ!

United Methodist Rural Advocates (UMRA) serves as **a voice** to the United Methodist Church (UMC) and beyond, a voice to the richness and blessing of rural people, rural communities, and rural churches. UMRA has been a **legislative voice** within the UMC by making sure that the rural church and rural communities are not ignored. In recent years, UMRA has also provided small **grants to creative ministries** of churches in rural communities.

UMRA is a faith-based organization that was established in 1940 as the Methodist Rural Fellowship. In 2012, the group changed its name to the United Methodist Rural Advocates to reflect our **advocacy for rural people, rural communities, and rural churches.**

Many myths endure regarding rural people and rural places. One of those myths is that much of our nation is not rural anymore. Did you know that over 66 million people (around **1 in 5 Americans**) live in rural areas? And that around 97% of the land in the United States is considered rural? Within those rural areas, you will find not only people that are cultural treasures, but also much food that feeds America and beyond as well as beautiful natural resources.

As you read this brochure and learn about the mission and work of United Methodist Rural Advocates, please consider joining us in this cause. **Your prayers and your support help UMRA lift every rural voice!**

Jodie R. Flessner, Chairperson

Among our accomplishments

* Clergy voting rights for Local Pastors

*The NOW (Nurture, Outreach, Witness) administrative structure, which has been adopted by churches of all sizes, as a better way to build ministry teams and develop ministry leaders, and as a means to better understand the overall goals of a congregation.

* UMRA championed the creation of the Certified Lay Minister program. This allows trained laypersons to provide leadership in many areas of the church.

UMRA
Awarded grants to rural churches for new and creative outreach.

A Community Playground in VA

A Food pantry in CO

A Program serving children K-12 in IN

A Feeding ministry in OH

A Turning guns into tools program in MI

A Clothing Ministry in PA

A Personal care pantry in IL

A Drop-in Center and Café for at-risk youth in WA

Equipment and supplies for a young peoples' Bible study in OK

For more details go to
www.umruraladvocates.com

UNITED METHODIST RURAL ADVOCATES

Our Mission:
To advocate for the work of Jesus Christ in rural, town and country churches.

OUR VISION:
Empowered by the Holy Spirit, UMRA is a voice that values all people in rural, town and country settings, where all are offered discipleship for Jesus Christ, and where all can realize God-centered, spiritual, social, and economic potential.

Our Covenant:
Believing God has called and gifted UMRA to advocate for the work of Jesus Christ and up-lifted by the practice of the Wesleyan means of grace, UMRA members and affiliates covenant together to grow spiritually so that UMRA may faithfully fulfil our mission and vision.

As UMRA continues to grow and improve how it meets the needs of the peoples from rural communities and their ministry leaders, we seek to do more than provide a voice for rural churches at General Conference. We desire to provide a greater level of support and encouragement to all ministry leaders, regardless of their church and location.