



# UNITED METHODIST RURAL FELLOWSHIP BULLETIN

*Enriched communications connecting rural churches*

**VOL. LIX**

**Post Winter 2009-2010**

**No.4**

The United Methodist Rural Fellowship *Bulletin* is the official newsletter of the United Methodist Rural Fellowship. It is sanctioned by the Executive Committee of the United Methodist Rural Fellowship and intended to accurately reflect events, projects, and emphasis of the organization. There may be opinions in the Bulletin that are solely those of an identified writer and may not reflect the official position of the United Methodist Rural Fellowship, or of the United Methodist Church in general.

## *From our President*



Photo provided by West Ohio UMC Press. Used with Permission

### **President Roger Grace**

Sitting at my desk one day in the early Fall, I got a phone call from Jay Rundell. Jay is the President of the Methodist Theological Seminary in Ohio, where I received my M.Div. two or three years ago. President Rundell was calling me to invite me to an event to honor the Rev. Dr. Harold McSwain, Professor Emeritus at MTSO. For several years now MTSO has honored retired professors from MTSO for their work in training seminarians. He asked me if I would be willing to introduce Harold to those who were gathering to honor him and the Rev. Dr. Jeff Hopper, the other honoree that night. I told him that I would be pleased to do so.

I have known Harold since I started at MTSO in 1984. He was a professor who became a friend as well as a mentor to me. He introduced me to Cooperative Parish ministry during an intensive term class and stoked my

**Note: Registrations and Donations may now be paid via Credit Card thru Pay Pal. See Story On Page 7.**

interest in working together to accomplish the ministry we've been called to do. He taught me many of the administrative skills that I have used as pastor of a county seat church, and as a District Superintendent. I vividly remember Harold saying in class one day that, "You have to pick and choose your battles. Not every hill is worth dying for. If you fight every time you have a chance, you will spend your entire ministry bloody and bruised." Those words have caused me to pause and reflect when the opportunity to fight has come along. Sometime I've decided that it was time to fight, and many more times I've decided that winning a particular battle wasn't worth the war.

Since many of you know Harold I won't go into all of the details I learned about him as I prepared for introducing him at MTSO. [The introductory statement is elsewhere in this bulletin.] I will tell you though that in the course of preparing for that night, I spoke with his wife, Joyce. Many of you are aware that Harold came to Rural, town and Country Ministry out of a church of over 2000 members in Memphis, TN. I wanted to know why he made the transition, so I asked her. Here is what she said: "As he was preparing for his Quarterly Conference as a new Student Pastor, Harold contacted his District Superintendent with a question about one of the forms that he needed to complete. The DS had a basketball

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Part of Harold's journey has included serving as Pastor of local churches for about 9 years. Some of his accomplishments included being the first Director of the Hinton rural Life Center in Hayesville, N.C. where he served for many years. One of his colleagues, the Rev. Dr. Bill Appleby, says of Harold, "Through his dedication, commitment, leadership and vision for churches with a smaller memberships and cooperative ministries, he built Hinton Center on a solid and firm foundation. Hinton became the 'home base' for the Southeastern Jurisdiction Fellowship of Leaders in Town and Country Ministries."

The quote from Dr. Appleby is one of many that I received when I sent out the notice that Harold was to be honored. Although I was not able to use all of the information I received, I did make a copy of everything that came in and put it into a folder that I presented to Harold and Joyce at the conclusion of the event. One of the high points of the night was the fact that Harold's good friend and fellow Rural Chaplain and UMRF member, Dale Fooshee, was in Columbus that week-end and he got to attend.

If you are interested in seeing or reading more of the event at MTSO in Harold's honor, I believe that you can still find it on the MTSO website. Go to [mtso.edu](http://mtso.edu) and follow the prompts to find the Schooler Institute.

It is good to pause and remember, to give thanks, to those who have helped us become the persons we are today.

*Roger Grace, President*

## *Creativity at the Crossroads*

*James I Killen, Jr.*

As Methodism seeks to revitalize itself, we must be careful to invest our resources and our creativity in the places where we have strength. But there is one place that is in danger of being overlooked.

As we busy ourselves being mega churches to serve metropolitan areas, we must not forget that a large portion of the population of the country lives in small rural communities that cannot be served by those churches.

Among the major denominations that offer a vital and balanced witness in the Christian faith, Methodism is uniquely well equipped to serve those people.

We have inherited from previous generations a network of churches that has placed a building and a congregation of some size in almost every crossroads community in the country. The members of those congregations are often committed to their churches.

Unfortunately, those churches often thought of as struggling or even dying because we keep comparing them to the churches they once were or to the churches that are having spectacular growth because they are located in thriving communities.

We can change the way we think about those churches, however. What would happen if we affirmed the strategic possibilities of those churches not for numerical growth but for ministry?

Methodism has another resource that many Methodists don't even know about. We have a well developed system for training and enabling leaders to give creative leadership in those small-membership churches. The Schools for Local Pastors and the Course of Study Schools provide training for people who are called to ministry but for who attending seminary is not practical.

I am privileged to teach in that system. I stopped to write this article, which I have been meaning to write for a long time, in the middle of grading papers for 15 people who enrolled in the class on "The Pastor as Interpreter of the Scriptures."

The students are mostly middle aged or older men and women who will serve as part-time or full-time pastors of small rural churches. Most of them are second-career people who have advanced training in other professions. Two or three have doctoral degrees. They are very capable and highly motivated people. They are a typical class. And because I got excited about the papers that some had written, I decided to stop and write this article.

### ***Local pastors have a lot to offer.***

Methodism also has a connectional structure that can enable groups of small churches to work together to provide programs for children, youth, and young, single and married adults that many small churches cannot provide alone. (We will have to repent of our jealousy and competitiveness to make that work, but repentance is a good thing.)

To realize our potential, we will need to stop measuring small congregations by unrealistic and inappropriate standards, and help them to set goals for themselves, not in terms of numerical growth but in terms of transformation of the world to the glory of God.

We need to help small membership churches feel good about themselves and their possibilities. Then we can begin to develop creative new patterns for ministry.

Why should all worship services be staged like the services in churches where people sit in rows and are served by robed clergy and choirs and sing to organ music? Why must we keep on letting our empty choir lofts condemn us? Why can't we develop some patterns for vital and faithful and appropriate for 12 or 15 people sitting in a circle?

That can be exciting. And if the small membership churches set their minds to it, they can develop patterns of ministry to their community that could make the mega-churches jealous.

Here is another radical suggestion. What would happen if we looked to the local pastors and lay leadership of the churches themselves for creative new ideas rather than looking to the seminaries and general boards? Yes, I know

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how little rural churches like to change, but that might be different if they were invited to initiate the changes themselves.

My guess is that if we stop being preoccupied with numerical growth and give attention to ministry, surprising numerical growth just might happen in unexpected places.

Our mission is to "go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." ( Mark 16:15) There are places where the mega churches can't go, but Methodism can. Let's put our creativity where our strength is and respond to the call.

*The Rev. Killen, a retired elder is the Texas Conference teacher in the Lon Morris extension of the Perkins School of Theology Course of Study School. He is also author of " Pastoral Care in Small membership Churches" (Abingdon 2005) Copied with permission and appreciation.*

## Small Rural Fire & Rescue Service Blessed by Kentucky Conference Generosity



Picture credited to Hopkins UMC and Sherril Turner. Used with permission and appreciation.

by Revelle Moore Lawson

**RBMC Superintendent Chuck Jack, Bishop Lindsey Davis, Fire Chief Clifford Betty Jr., KY Conference Treasurer Michael Watts, with new ambulance.**

Red Bird Vol. Fire & Rescue, Beverly, KY, recently took delivery of a 2009 4X4 ambulance. The primary source of funding for the purchase of this unit was made possible by the Kentucky Annual Conference through the Eastern Kentucky United Methodist Health Education & Welfare fund. This new unit replaced a 1994 ambulance that the department had been operating with since 1998. The old ambulance had 200,000 miles and was in need of major repairs.

Red Bird Vol. Fire & Rescue is a community volunteer service located on the Queendale Campus of Red Bird Missionary Conference. It covers portions of Clay, Leslie, and Bell counties with fire, rescue and emergency medical services. EMS Director/Assistant Kenneth D. Lawson affirmed the importance of having this vital piece of equipment. "Having a four-wheel drive unit during times when winter weather and road conditions are difficult."

B. Lane Noble, Emergency Medical Technician, shares "It's great having a dependable unit while I'm serving my community in people's time of need. My whole family lives in the area, and it's wonderful to know it's there when needed."

Although a basic Life Support service at this time, Red Bird Fire and Rescue has two paramedics who volunteer with the service. The new ambulance was designed to easily be upgraded to an Advanced Life Support Unit in the future.

In June 2009, Bishop Lindsey Davis and Kentucky Conference Treasurer Michael Watts were able to see firsthand the new unit. Members of the Kentucky Conference Cabinet enjoyed watching Bishop Davis fulfilling a childhood dream by engaging the lights and siren.

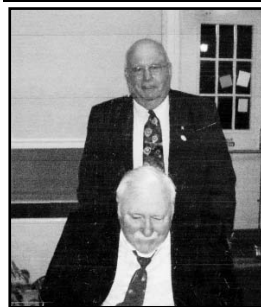
Chief Clifford Berry, Jr. states, "This new ambulance is a lifelong dream for some of our members. There would not have been a way for our small department to have ever afforded such a unit without the assistance of the Kentucky Annual Conference grant program. This unit will greatly assist us in providing lifesaving service to our community."

Red Bird Vol. Fire & Rescue would like to thank the Kentucky Annual Conference for their immense assistance in helping us be a blessing to others. The department is continuing to raise funds to pay off the \$25,000. still owed on the unit.

By Capt. Revelle Moore Lawson, Paramedic

*The above story was initiated by the Kentucky Annual Conference Net News October-December Vol 14 #4 Copied with permission and appreciation*

## Celebration of Harold McSwain's Ministry



Roger Grace Photo Used with permission and appreciation.

**Harold and Old Friend Dale Fooshee**



Roger Grace Photo Used with permission and appreciation.

**Joyce and Harold McSwain**

Harold McSwain's ministry was celebrated at Methodist School of Theology October 11, 2009. Below is the statement of the presentation given by The Rev. Roger Grace.

It is indeed a privilege to be able to present to you tonight my good friend and mentor the Rev. Dr. Harold W. McSwain, Professor Emeritus at Methodist School of Theology in Ohio.

It is important to begin by stating Dr. McSwain's educational background. Dr. McSwain received his A.B. at Lambuth College, a Masters in Biology at Peabody College, his B.D. at Southern Methodist University, and his Ph.D. at Emory University. It was while he was a student at Lambuth College and serving as a student Pastor in a smaller membership 5-point charge, that Harold began his lifelong ministry working with Town & Country, Rural Churches. As I was preparing for tonight, I asked Joyce how it was that Harold who comes out of a church of over 2,000 members in the city of Memphis, came to dedicate his life and ministry to the smaller, rural, town & country churches.

As he was preparing for his Quarterly Conference as a new Student Pastor, Harold contacted his District Superintendent with a question about one of the forms that he needed to

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complete. The DS had a basketball game on and wouldn't turn it off, and he seemed more interested in the game than in the concern Harold brought to him. At that point, Harold, who has always been concerned about issues of justice, decided that the smaller membership Town & Country, rural churches deserved to have the best leadership possible, and he began his life work of advocating for, ministering to, working with, and training leaders for, those churches.

Part of Harold's journey has included serving as Pastor of local churches for about 9 years. Some of his accomplishments include being the first Director of the Hinton Rural Life Center in Hayesville, N.C. where he served for many years. One of his colleagues, the Rev. Dr. Bill Appleby, says of Harold, "Through his dedication, commitment, leadership and vision for churches with smaller memberships and cooperative ministries, he built Hinton Center on a solid and firm foundation. Hinton became the "home base" for the Southeastern Jurisdiction Fellowship of Leaders in Town and Country Ministries.

It was while he was at Hinton rural Life Center that Harold began serving as a leader in the United Methodist rural Fellowship on the national level. He spent 8 years as the President of UMRF. A major part of the work of UMRF included having a presence every 4 years at General Conference and actively advocating for legislation to help the rural churches and people of the United Methodist Church. Many of the changes that have made it into the Book of Discipline that have responded to the needs and concerns of rural churches and people have come about directly or indirectly because of the efforts of Harold Mc Swain and those who have worked with him over the years.

In addition to his participation in the work of UMRF and being the Executive Director of Hinton Rural Life Center, Harold was a key figure in the start-up of the Appalachian Development Committee. ADC, as it was known then, is an organization that responds to the needs of the people of the Appalachian Region of the United States. It addresses issues of environmental concern such as Mountain Top Removal mining, water quality, strip mining, poverty, cooperative ministry, and many other issues. One of the books that Harold wrote was titled, "Appalachia, Similarities to the Third World." I believe that it was published in the early 1980's. In it Dr. McSwain compares the absentee ownership and treatment of the people and resources of much of Appalachia by big business interests, to the way big business has related to third world countries. ADC is now known as the Appalachian Ministry Network, and continues to this day to advocate, train, and resource ministry in the Appalachian Region.

While he was the Executive Director of Hinton Rural Center, Harold was actively recruited to come to

Ohio and serve on the faculty here at Methodist Theological School in Ohio and at United Theological Seminary in Dayton. While teaching courses on Town and Rural ministries at the two seminaries, he also became the Director of the Office of Town and Rural Ministries, or since we United Methodists like acronyms, CTRM. One of the compliments for Harold's effectiveness as a professor comes from a former intern who later became a co-worker with him. "A woodcarver in the mountains of North Carolina was known to say: 'In every piece of wood there is some kind of animal. You just have to identify it and carve it out.'" The intern/co-worker went on to say, "Harold, more than any other person I know, operates of the belief that God created every person with potential-even those who may appear as some 'dead wood.' He endeavors to find ways to draw out that potential in person with whom he works. Thank you Harold, for that God given gift of knowing how to unlock possibilities in individuals and groups."

During the mid 1980's, while the farm crisis was escalating here in the U.S., Dr. Mc Swain authored another book. This one was titled "Understanding and Responding to The Family Farm Fellowship," CTRM, and other organizations with which Harold was affiliated, worked long and hard to respond to the needs and concerns of those families and companies that were being devastated by changes in the farm areas of our nation and world.

The final accomplishment, that I feel I must mention this evening, is Harold's work to create the Rural Chaplains Association. RCA came about as a response to the farm crisis. There was, and is, a need for people in rural, town & country areas to be supported by persons who know some of the issues they face and have a desire to stand with them through the ups and downs of life. RCA is made up of lay and clergy persons, United Methodists and persons of other denominations, US citizens and folks from other nations, who have a heart for rural ministry and who are willing to take training on a regular basis to be better able to serve in town and country, rural settings. It was founded in 1991 and has annual gatherings for training and fellowship. Rural Chaplains have met in places as far away as Guatemala and Alaska. Rural Chaplains are serving in remote places all around our nation, as well as Russia. In fact, one of the Rural Chaplains in Russia sent you a greeting Harold and Joyce. I have it here in a folder for you. A number of folks from RCA and UMRF sent them to me to present to you tonight. Whatever Rural Chaplains are, they work to encourage and affirm the life and work of those in out-of-the way places. Without Harold's organizational skills, dreams of working together, and tireless efforts, the Rural Chaplains Association probably never would have come into existence.

I want to conclude my introduction of the Rev. Dr. Harold Mc Swain with these thoughts. It is important to honor and recognize the life and work of Dr. McSwain

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by our gathering tonight. I know it means a lot to Harold to Joyce, and to the family. And the best way to honor him, is to continue the work that he has given his life to accomplish, to train up leaders for town and country, rural church life and ministry. I will finish with these words from Dr. Gladys Campbell, "The Reverend Dr. Harold W. McSwain's legacy lives in myriads of people who he has touched in ministry. Thanks be to God for our teacher, friend, counselor, and co-worker."

Roger Grace.

*Roger is the Asst. to the District Superintendent for the Capitol North District of the Ohio West Conference. He lives in Grove City, Ohio, and is the President of the United Methodist Rural Fellowship National.*

## That Dog Can't Sing

By Bill Kemp

Every once in a while you see some fluff journalism about a pet that has been taught to sing. While it may be memorable to hear a beagle croon Moon River, I'm always left with the feeling that it's not exactly what the critter was designed to do. I have been meditating lately upon what God and the Wesley brothers may have designed the Methodist movement to do. I think Jesus' words, "As you have done it for the least of these..." has special significance for those in our tradition (Matthew 25:40). Other denominations may seek for institutional excellence, purpose-driven results, or liturgical purity, but we who are Wesleyan want to develop faith-groups that share their Gospel, their love, and their purses with those on the margins of our society. For me, this means that we must focus at General Conference 2012 on questions like the following:

1) What is needed for the development of healthy, sustainable, congregations and faith-groups in regions that are rural (low population density) and/or economically challenged (low per-capita income compared to other areas of the country or Annual Conference)?

2) Where are the demographic pockets of people that are under-served or untouched by today's form of church? How do we share the Gospel, our love, and perhaps even our purses, with people who are vulnerable or marginalized? How do we help them form new faith groups?

3) How can the United Methodist Church work for positive social change? Are the small-membership churches that stand faithfully at the crossroads of our changing landscape still doing all the good that they can do for their communities? How can our new emerging faith groups continue the Wesleyan tradition of working for community transformation? Can we once again be known as the people who unite personal piety and social action?

Yes, I would like to discover the trick that would make

my church grow in membership, give their pastor a raise, and meet their conference apportionments. Yes, I am impressed when a suburban church grows to mega-church status. Every once in a while, a dog learns how to sing. What is it, I ask, that people of Wesleyan heritage can do today which no other faith tradition is able to do?

Wesley challenged his people to spread scriptural holiness across the land. Those words demand that we stop thinking in terms of institutional preservation. The church as we know it today will die. It is an old dog that has had forty years of statistical decline. Teaching it to do a few tricks won't help. If, however, we can reform our priorities to include supporting rural and urban congregations, ministering to marginalized people, and doing good in the hurting places of the world, then we will find our own turf to do the work of spreading scriptural holiness. Like the circuit riders of old, we will find ourselves with plenty of elbowroom. We also will rediscover what we have been designed to do. A beagle knows how to hunt and a United Methodist knows how to seek people at the edges of our society.

- Bill Kemp (To respond to this, email me at [bill@notperfectyet.com](mailto:bill@notperfectyet.com)) *Bill Kemp is an author of several books on the small and rural church, and a pastor of a small church himself. He is an elder in the UMC and lives and serves in Verona, Pa. Bill is the Northeastern Jurisdictional Representative for UMR.*

**UMRF Needs Your Membership!**

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## *Tisdale(KS) UMC Invites Neighbors to "National Night Out Party"*

*By Wilma Anglemyer*

TISDALE --- Tisdale United Methodist Church hosted a "National Night Out" party August 4 for the small rural community seven and a half miles east of Winfield. "National Night Out" is a community – strengthening, crime and drug prevention event.

The church sent invitations to every mailing address in the township and advertised the event in the local newspaper, inviting people in the surrounding area.

The event consisted of cook-out supper, games and contests with prizes, a tour of the church's new gymnasium that is being built, displays by various groups and communities, and children playing on the new play ground equipment that had been erected just one week before the event. When the new gymnasium is finished, it will be available for community use for dinners, sports, 4-H and other area meetings. [Ed. Note: The new gymnasium replaces an old one built in the 50's, a quonset building, which was by the open country church, and has been for years a community center.]

During the supper, music was provided by Circle of Friends, a group composed of Ida Finney and Barbara and Steve Madorin, with autoharp, guitar and vocals.

The highlight of the evening was the attendance of Cowley County Sheriff's officers and Emergency Medical Service personnel. They presented safety information and allowed people to look inside a sheriff's patrol car, and ambulance and the Crime Scene Investigation vehicle. A handcuff demonstration and a taser demonstration were also presented.

Booths were set up by various groups in the church to inform visitors about some of the church's programs.

The event was an opportunity to show people in the neighborhood what the church has to offer and be aware that the new gymnasium will be available for community use as well as church functions. The congregation

wanted to extend the hand of friendship and share a free meal with the community, along with the National Night Out agenda of informing the community of safety and emergency programs that are available to them.

*Wilma Anglemyer is a member of Tisdale UMC. Copied with appreciation and permission from the October 2009 edition of the Kansas West Connection. Thank You.*

## *You Ought To Read This*

The editor would like to recommend the April 2010 issue of National Geographic. It is a special issue titled "Water Our Thirsty World". Almost the whole issue is dedicated to water; its availability and unavailability.

## *UMRF Executive Committee Meets With Connectional Table Committee*

Ten Executive Committee Members of UMRF met in January with four members of the Connectional Table (CT) by conference call.

The meeting was chaired by Connectional Table Chair, Bishop John Hopkins, assisted by his assistant Mary Brooke-Cosad and UMRF President Roger Grace. Others attending from the CT were Beverly Wilkes-Knowle and Jay Brimm. Those from the UMRF Executive Committee were Debbie Katchem, Peggy Paige, Jodie Flessner, Ed Kail, Dwight Bastain, Alan Rice, Lyle Shipley, Carol Thompson, and Ronald Williams.

Roger mentioned that 1/3 of the United Methodist membership was from small and rural congregations.

The Bishop expressed concern that 40% of our churches had not had a profession of faith for the past year. He also mentioned concerns about economic conditions, added to a hit on pensions, insurance costs, & clergy salaries.

Roger and Beverly mentioned the lack of current communication with the general boards. In the past we have had communication through a representative from the GBOD, and also from the GBGM, in the persons

Gladys Campbell and Carol Thompson. That position was united with Urban Ministry replaced with Diane Johnson, Executive of the Rural-Urban Network (RUN). She has retired, and with the hiring freeze, we are wondering about a replacement. GBOD has discontinued their rural office.

Ed reminded us that UMRF was founded because of an influx of delegates at GC940 from larger congregations who did not have a rural understanding. He mentioned that we have not been able to really define "rural." He called for a variety of plans to revitalize/develop churches, depending on their context, having various ways to offer them, and finding a way to work with the rural churches.

Bishop Hopkins noted that often people have realized their importance because they have someone to connect to/with in the larger church.

Ed mentioned that ethnic and rural congregation often feel second-class because measurements are often focused on the larger church.

Alan raised the question about "right-sizing". Putting churches together to fund a full-time pastor, is not helpful. By putting a part-time local pastor in the community as a general rule has often worked better. He raised the question about who the primary consumer was, the clergy or the local church. If it is not the local church, the problem is systemic.

Bishop Hopkins mentioned that many conferences have too many elders and are trying to work with guaranteed appointments. He questioned if what we are doing is sustainable.

Again Alan mentioned the question of the lack of definition of "rural."

Bishop asked if there were rural congregations that could support an elder. Alan responded that in WNC there was a "dashboard" indicating vital churches.

Beverly commented that, in reality, we get what we measure. We have not been attentive to what we should be measuring outside a population growth area. We are not measuring how the churches are shaping their communities. Some areas have no new people, so we have no scale for them.

Roger: stated that there is currently a

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survey being done hopefully in April about the main concerns of the rural churches.

Mary commented that the CT is continually trying to see how they can make more voices heard.

Ron was concerned about T & C funding, and about the continuation of the T & C Comprehensive plan.

Roger requested that we find ways we can increase communication with the CT. Ron suggested that in the meantime there might be someone that could be a liaison between the CT and UMRF. Someone on the CT.

Roger closed the meeting with Prayer.

**UMRF WEBSITE:**

[www.umrf.org](http://www.umrf.org)

**LOCAL PASTORS &  
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS  
WEBSITE:**

[www.nfamandlp.org](http://www.nfamandlp.org)

**RURAL CHAPLAINS  
ASSOCIATION:**

[www.rcahome.com](http://www.rcahome.com)

*Registrations &  
Finances Can Now Be  
Handled On The Website*

The [www.umrf.org](http://www.umrf.org) Webpage is gearing up in preparation for General Conference 2012. You can download registration forms and make credit card payments (through Pay Pal) for attendance at our November 9 through 12th, 2010 Legislative Convocation in Tampa. As the time approaches, we hope to make the web site a flexible resource, both for information concerning General Conference and UMRF, as well as, for tracking rural related legislative pieces said Bill Kemp [bill@notperfectyet.com](mailto:bill@notperfectyet.com) To pay on line go to [www.umrf.org](http://www.umrf.org) and the key Consultation-word or Consultation-pdf, and then if you wish to pay by Pay Pal key "donate."

Bill Kemp is the UMRF Webmaster.

*(MO) Church Rethinks  
Sunday School To Improve  
Spiritual Formation*

Cameron, Mo. The term Sunday School carries some baggage. For kids, who consider school their workplace, going to "school" on Sunday isn't always the easiest sell. For adult volunteers, adding Sunday school time to Sunday morning worship to the top of their busy weekend schedules can often be hard to commit to Cameron [MO] UMC is trying something different they are taking the "Sunday" and "School" out of their spiritual formation experience.



*Photo Courtesy of and with permission of Cameron, Mo UMC*

"Now Sunday is all about worship for us," said associate pastor Jenn Klein. "We were having a hard time getting enough adult volunteers for Sunday School and Wednesday night,

so we decided to put all of our resources both financial and personnel, into one quality program for kids on Wednesday nights."

The adult volunteers required has been cut in half, from about 30 to 15, although many of the volunteers on Sunday morning were the same volunteers as Wednesday night, so the number of people didn't decrease so much as the demand on the people who were helping.

"We require three volunteers in each of our five classes, so if one person gets sick or otherwise can't make it, we still have two." Said Charlotte Phillips, children and youth coordinator. "I also recruited a man for each class, because we were focusing on spiritual formation, and I thought it would be good for the boys to have a male role model present."

The church requires all volunteers who work with youth or children to be Safe Sanctuaries certified through the Missouri conference.

Some adults who preferred to have a Sunday morning Sunday School class meet on Sunday mornings, but there is not Sunday School for children, There will not be any new adult

Sunday School Classes started, and many adults are now participating in small group spiritual formation experience on Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

"Our hope is that these will be pilot groups for more small groups starting on other week nights." Klein said.

The Wednesday night program begins with a community meal, offered for a \$1. donation. Recent attendance at the meal has been around 150. At 5:45 p.m. educational programs begin.

Because they are dedicating their financial resources for the children's formation curriculum to a single day, rather than having a set for Wednesday night and Sunday morning, the church was able to improve what they are offering. The children are participating in a new "Way of the Child" program part of the Upper Room Companions in the Christ curriculum, in which they move from station and engage in reflective exercise to promote being present to God.

"One skeptical adult volunteer left in tears after seeing how powerfully the children were engaged in this," Klein said.

Everyone present can benefit from being involved.

"We choose a curriculum that allows for the teachers to grow, as well as the students," Phillips said.

Moving Sunday School out of the Sunday morning schedule also made some room for changes in the worship schedule. The church had been having worship at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. being a contemporary service with communion every Sunday. It didn't get out until 12:15, which made lunch a little late for families with young children. The worship now starts at 10:45 and concludes at noon.

"It was only a 15 minute change but people seem happy with it." Klein said.

Last year in the Missouri Conference, about 31,000 people attended Sunday School on an average Sunday, which is about 37.5 percent of the average Sunday morning worship attendance. Nationwide this number has not fluctuated much in the past several years.

For information, go to [www.cameronumc.org](http://www.cameronumc.org) or email [cgarkitte@cameronumc.org](mailto:cgarkitte@cameronumc.org).

*Copied with permission and appreciation from the Missouri Conference News October 16, 2009 issue. Thank-you!*

## Musings Of A Country Preacher



(Photo by Williams)

Clergy Couples often pay a great price for their joint ministry.

The first one, that in some conferences there is still a feeling about those in authority about female ministers and the women are told to go home to

take care of their families.

Then, there are times when the appointments of the couple are miles and miles apart. This is not always the appointing cabinet's fault. It is difficult to appoint two elders in places close together.

There are other problems. Most of the time full time pastors each have full conference insurance coverage, at full insurance coverage cost for each of them. Often the cabinet helps the congregations save money by causing one member to go to 3/4 time (Though is any appointment really less than full time?) The results of this is often that the 3/4 time pastor loses some of their pension benefits, and often their Workman's Comp on the job accident insurance. There are times that this amounts to big bucks and I just want to remind people that this happens.

If, as you observe, you see some of these things happening to a clergy couple that you know, stop and say "thanks" to them. They may be paying a big price for serving in their parish (s).

Oh, and while you are at it, just remember that the cabinet's job is not what it used to be either. With the complications of appointing clergy couples, clergy with spouses who have other careers, families with severe health issues, and other situations, the cabinet's job gets more and more complicated. This is added to this issue being more evident relating to the "Safe and Sacred Spaces" situation. Much of that lands right in the cabinet's lap.

On a totally different topic, one of our conferences was defending themselves in some sort of sexual impropriety suit. The judge asked one of the conference officials how many pastors who had had problems with sexual impropriety were still under appointment. The conference official did the research for the period going back over 40 years to the conference merger at the time of denominational union. The official came back and said "Not one." The judge questioned the statement, and the official told him (or her, maybe) that for the judges purpose the records were open. The case against the conference was closed because all of the "Safe and

Sacred Spaces" training and requirements had been taken care of.

It is too sad that any of this business has to take place. Rather shameful, but congratulations to those officials, sometimes disgustingly hardheaded, who have led us on the right path in doing all we can to prevent and correct these problems. The real inheritors of this hard work are the children and others who are not bothered.

*Ronald J. Williams, Editor*

### IMPORTANT FUTURE UMRF DATES

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November 9-13 2010 Legislative Consultation, Tampa, FL.

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Executive Committee Preceding to above.

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September 6-9 Executive Committee Possibly Nashville, TN

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April 22-23, 2012 Executive Committee & General  
Conference Witness Team Training

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April 24-May 4 General Conference, Tampa Florida. The  
Quadrennial UMRF Banquet and Election will be during  
General Conference 2012

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November 13-16, 2012 Executive Committee, Possibly OH

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(The UMRF Calendar is on a 4 year rotation beginning  
each time the year after General Conference.)

## Board Chair Changes For The Rural Chaplains

There were changes in the Executive Committee of the Rural Chaplains Associations when it met in Huntsville, Alabama in October 2009. Among other offices Pete Gomez of Espanola, N.M. finished his term as Chair of the Executive Committee and he was replaced by Johnny Arrington of Meeker, Colorado.

### JOHNNY ARRINGTON

Johnny was born and raised in South Central Oklahoma at Marlow. He attended Central University in Ada, Oklahoma and graduated from Bethel College in McKenzie, TN.

He and his wife Patti settled in Colorado Springs, where he received the call to ministry at Wilson UMC. He completed the five year Ministerial Course at St. Paul School of Theology in 2005, becoming an Associate Member in 2008.

He served the Delores Church at Four Corners, Colorado, and after 5 years was appointed to Meeker where he is in his sixth year and where they are involved

*(Continued on page 9)*



*Continued from page 8*

in a new church building project.

Johnny and Patti have loved Colorado, for over 20 years, even shoveling snow. He has enjoyed rural ministry, seeing progress that only God could bring about. He has been a Certified Rural Chaplain for 11 years, and is anxious to see where God calls the organization and the chaplains to become.

Johnny and Patti have two children, Joe and his family in San Antonio, Texas and Audra who lives in Kyle Texas, and three grandsons.

*By Ronald Williams*

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## *Rural Chaplains Focus Event For 2010 Set*

The Rural Chaplains Focus Event for 2010 will be held in Tucson, Arizona and Nogales, Arizona and Nogales Mexico, October 31 to November 4, 2010.

It will be on immigration and will be entitled "Beyond Borders"

This will also be the event when both new Probationer Rural Chaplains and new Certified Rural Chaplains will be interviewed and brought into the fellowship of the Rural Chaplains.

For more information contact Dean H. Owen Gordon whose information is on the UMRF Executive Committee page.

*By Ronald Williams*

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### **TO CONTACT THE EDITOR**

**Do not** write to the editor, or change address at the Leonardville address. That address is for outgoing mailing only. When responding to the editor write him at 3839 Fox Ridge Drive, Hunters Crossing, Manhattan, Kansas 66502-8934, Phone 785-587-4122 or email [ronaldj7@cox.net](mailto:ronaldj7@cox.net) The proof reading is done by Vera Williams, Doug Denning and Kirk Hargett; Volunteers. The final proof and the art work by the Printery of Clay Center, Kansas, and the preparation for mailing by Postal Prep in Manhattan, Kansas.

# PET

## Personal Energy Transportation



*Picture provided by PET Columbia. Used with appreciation and permission*

### **PET display at the Missouri State wide Festival of Sharing.**

In this issue I have decided to list the U.S. affiliates of PET International. PET International is made up of many PET affiliates, each operating independently, but working cooperative in a confederation. They are sponsored by various churches and civic organizations.

The affiliates are:

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Continued from page 9

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**PET WISCONSIN** Robert Peterson 1200 McKinley Dr.  
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## **SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP CHAIR MOVES**

Gary Moody, the Special Membership Chair,  
has moved to a new parish.

He may be contacted at  
P.O. Box 414, Shidler, OK 74652-0414,  
Phone 918-793-4550.

His Cell Phone will remain the same.

## **UPPER ROOM**

In every one of the 23 rural  
congregations I have served,  
there has been one constant  
service, the Upper Room.  
Contratulations to the Upper  
Room on 75 years of devotional  
material.

# Your United Methodist Rural Fellowship Executive Committee

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## SMALL CONGREGATIONS ASSIST AT WEST VIRGINIA MINE DISASTER

In West Virginia, it happens that mine disasters most often happen where there are small communities and thus small rural congregations,. Such was the case with the Upper Big Branch coal mine disaster in southern West Virginia, on April 6th. Members of the rural congregations in the area, their pastors and West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin were on the scene doing what they could. It was Gov. Manchin who brought the worst news to many of the families who were waiting.

Pastors Susan and Steve Rector (Bluefield Trinity & Bluewell UMC's) were among 7 of the area pastors according to Rev. Helen Oats the D.S. of the West Virginia Southern District. Her husband Pastor Paul Stadelman was one of the pastors (Beaver and Blue Jay UMC's).

Pastor Steve Rector asked someone if he could give

them a hug, and soon everyone was lined up to give each other a hug. Pastor Susan Rector had high praise for the governor. She said "He did as much pastoral care as any of us."

The hardest thing was the waiting. The pastors came there time after time just to wait with them comfort them and pray. Among the people, often prayers for self turned into prayers for the whole community, and for individuals waiting.

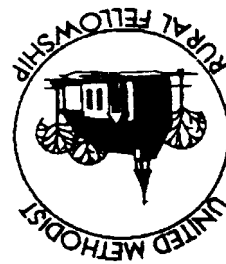
Ministry amid uncertainty is "even more vital," Susan said, because the miners' families are "not willing to give up. That is the most important thing, waiting and praying with them and not giving up hope. "We hope our presence will say to them, there is always hope. That is what Easter is, Christ is risen and even in the midst of this, Christ is alive with us."

*We are short of room, and therefore had only room for 300 words. The above is gleanings from an excellent story by Kathy Noble of the Interpreter which was written for United Methodist News Service. We saw it in the Oregon/Idaho Conference Connector, Vol. 3 Issue 14. We appreciate this story.*

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