Advocate subscription campaign in full swing

Packet of promotional materials to be used in this year’s Virginia United Methodist Advocate subscription campaign (including bulletin insert, poster and copy of the October issue of the magazine) have been mailed to Advocate representatives in every local church in the Virginia Conference.

If the Communications office did not have the name of an Advocate rep for a church, the materials were sent to the church’s Lay Leader.

Lists of all current Advocate subscribers in each congregation will be e-mailed to the Advocate reps this week.

If you subscribe to the Advocate during October you can benefit yourself (by getting a great resource to read in print or online) and help victims of disasters at the same time. For each subscription purchased in October, $1 will be donated to United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in honor of the Rev. Dr. Denise Honeycutt, our own conference pastor recently named deputy general secretary of UMCOR.

UMCOR is the disaster relief and development organization of The United Methodist Church and is part of the General Board of Global Ministries. It is well known for staying on the scene of disasters to help with long-term restoration of lives and communities. UMCOR, which operates internationally and in the U.S., often remains in a disaster area after most other humanitarian organizations have gone.

The Virginia United Methodist Advocate is the official monthly magazine of the Virginia Conference. To subscribe to the Advocate – print, digital or both – call (804) 521-1110 or 1-800-768-6040, ext. 110; e-mail Advocate@vaumc.org; or you can go to www.vaumc.org/advocate.

Last week, the conference Communications office sent out free digital copies of the October issue of the Advocate. This issue provides updates on the conference’s “Equipping Vital Congregations” effort, highlighting introduction of a new data collection and reporting system and plans for “Discipleship Circles,” groups patterned after John Wesley’s “Holy Clubs” that provide for spiritual growth and support, connection and accountability.

In addition, the Rev. Larry Davies tells about a small church that is a vital congregation – proving that size does not determine vitality. The online Advocate will be e-mailed to all clergy and laity who have an e-mail address registered with the conference.

If you don’t currently have your own subscription to the Advocate, this will give you a chance to see what you’re missing. To receive future issues – either online digital or print versions – subscribe now by calling Pam Culler at 1-800-768-6040, ext. 110, or (804) 521-1110; e-mail Advocate@vaumc.org; or to subscribe online visit www.vaumc.org/advocate. The cost is $15 for one year of printed magazine; $10 for one year of digital version; $20 for both print and digital. Multiple-year subscriptions available at reduced rates.

Bishops differ over same-sex ceremony: Retired Bishop Melvin Talbert has announced he will officiate at a wedding for two men on Oct. 26 in Birmingham, Ala. Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, episcopal leader for the North Alabama Conference issued a statement asking Talbert not to officiate at the wedding for the men, who are United Methodist. “The anticipated media coverage of this event will test our capacity to remain focused on our vision, mission and priorities that have emerged over the past year,” Wallace-Padgett said. Talbert said he talked to Wallace-Padgett before agreeing to do the ceremony. “I told them (the couple) I would do it, but I would need time to speak to my colleague bishop there first,” Talbert said. “I talked to her, she listened, thought about it and called me back requesting that I not do it. I had to tell her respectfully I could not agree to her request. I am really grateful for the graceful way she has handled this.” “I do appreciate Bishop Talbert giving me a courtesy call in advance of this being made public notifying me of his plan of action,” Wallace-Padgett said. Bobby Prince and Joe Openshaw, members of Discovery UMC, Birmingham, Ala., were legally married in Washington, D.C., earlier this year but said in a blog “a holy wedding in the presence of family and friends will make the celebration, and our lives, complete.”

Lay Sunday is next week: Lay Sunday is a time to recognize the work and mission of all laity – not only within the walls of the church but in everyday lives. The quadrennial theme is “Disciples Called to Action,” with the theme for 2013 being “Developing Effective Lay Leadership.”

Annual Conference DVDs are in the mail: DVDs of the 2013 session of Virginia Annual Conference have finally been completed and were mailed last week to those who purchased sets. For questions or more information, contact Pam Culler in the Communications office at (804) 521-1110 or 1-800-768-6040, ext. 110.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Virginia United Methodists and serves as a link to the in-depth reporting of the Virginia United Methodist Advocate, the official magazine of the Virginia Conference. To subscribe to the monthly Virginia Advocate magazine, call (804) 521-1110 or 1-800-768-6040, ext. 110; or e-mail Advocate@vaumc.org. Unless indicated, all news compiled courtesy of the Virginia Advocate, the weekly e-Advocate, United Methodist News Service or The United Methodist News Scope.