An appeal from the Health and Welfare Team of the Virginia Conference Board of Global Ministries

World AIDS Day is Sunday, Dec. 1, 2013

World AIDS Day is held on December 1 each year. In 2013 it is a Sunday and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and commemorate people who have died.

The Health and Welfare Team of our Conference Board of Global Ministries is asking that this year every United Methodist church in Virginia give special recognition to World AIDS day on Sunday, Dec. 1. Please honor this special day by spending a few minutes during worship with prayer and/or liturgy. Congregations are also strongly encouraged to take an offering for the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund on World AIDS Day to support the work that our churches and partners do to understand and combat this disease in communities around the world. The Global AIDS Fund is an Advance Giving Project # 982345.

The Virginia Annual Conference takes great pride in being one of the leading conferences in the denomination in giving to the Global Aids Fund. Let’s continue to make a difference in the lives of those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Begun in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first disease awareness and prevention initiative of its kind ever established. The United Methodist Church has been a strong supporter of this special day, and the UM Global AIDS Fund urges all congregations to commemorate World AIDS Day.

What is the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund?

The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund supports education, prevention and care programs for people living with HIV and AIDS around the world. The fund currently supports over 200 HIV/AIDS church-oriented and Christ-centered ministries in 37 countries, including the United States.

The Fund develops appropriate promotional materials and funding guidelines, advocates for social justice and encourages partnerships between congregations and organizations globally that are engaged in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

The Fund is guided by an inter-agency committee composed of representatives from the Council of Bishops, General Board of Church & Society, General Board of Global Ministries,
HIV and AIDS

HIV is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus that attacks the body’s immune system, severely damaging it and leading to AIDS. This disease is one that has been named a “pandemic” because of the horrific statistics as well as the stigma experienced by people living with AIDS.

As of 2011, there were 34.2 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the world and two-thirds of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. Half of all new cases of AIDS are women, and more than 2 million children are living with HIV/AIDS. According to UNAIDS, in 2011 there were 1.7 million AIDS-related deaths.

In the United States, 1.2 million people are living with HIV. According to the Center for Disease Control, in 2009 African-Americans comprised 14% of the U.S. population but accounted for 44% of all new HIV infections. Rates of HIV for African-American and Latina women are spiking in the United States.

While many people consider HIV/AIDS a disease of the poor and relegated to developing countries and poor communities, the fact is that HIV/AIDS is a serious health problem in the United States and many countries and communities in the world. HIV/AIDS is an issue faced by our friends, neighbors, congregations and communities in the places we serve as a global church.

RESOURCES

For resources to help your church observe World AIDS Day, including downloadable worship materials and sermon ideas, or for more information on HIV/AIDS, visit the UMCOR Global Health web page:

http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Programs/Global-Health/HIV/AIDS/AIDS