

Sunday Advocate

Virginia United Methodist

Weekly supplement to the *Virginia United Methodist Advocate* newsmagazine

November 8, 2009

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

Today is Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday

Florida State University student Amanda Sentz prayed with a classmate needing a kidney donation. The college senior knew she had the same blood type as Noel Hutchinson, and could see the graduate student becoming weaker. However, considering giving a part of herself to someone else was not an easy decision.

Meanwhile, unaware hope was so close, Hutchinson would not lose faith, even as three potential donors were disqualified. "At times it was hard," she admitted.

What the two women prayed for – and in the end received – was the strength to take a leap of faith.

Hutchinson, 23, was diagnosed three years ago with a rare, recessive genetic disorder. The same condition resulted in her mother donating a kidney to her brother some seven years earlier.

The Rev. Vance Rains, pastor at the Wesley Foundation at the university, recalled Hutchinson's efforts to manage the condition through diet and medication. By June 2008, the need for a transplant had become clear, he said. "So we began to pray," he said.

As other potential donors dropped out, Sentz approached Hutchinson with an offer to help. "Decisions like this have to come from within. God put it on Amanda's heart," Rains said.

"We're supposed to love people as Christians," Sentz said, "to do anything we can to help our brothers and sisters. Christ would give anything for us, so why shouldn't I have given this for her?"

Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday is observed in The United Methodist Church the second Sunday in November. It is considered a Special Sunday without a special offering by the church. National Donor Sabbath is held in November and observed by many religions.

The United Methodist Church supports organ transplantation and organ donation in its *Social Principles* as "acts of charity, agape love, and self-sacrifice." The church also encourages "all people of faith to become organ and tissue donors as a part of their love and ministry to others in need."

Published weekly, the electronic *Sunday Advocate* summarizes news events affecting Virginia United Methodists and serves as a link to the in-depth reporting of the *Virginia United Methodist Advocate*, the official newsmagazine of the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church. To subscribe to the award-winning monthly *Virginia Advocate* newsmagazine, call (804) 521-1110 or 1-800-768-6040, ext. 110; or e-mail <Advocate@vaumc.org>.

More stewardship resources offered: The Division of Stewardship of the conference Board of Laity has new and updated resources on the conference Web site to assist local churches in educating their congregations about the importance of holistic stewardship programs. A description of one model used at Main Street UMC in Suffolk is offered. The resource booklet, *Stewardship and Capital Campaign Resources, Programs, and Packages*, has been updated and revised. The booklet can be downloaded at <www.vaumc.org> under "Ministries," then "Laity," and follow the "Stewardship" links. In collaboration with the Virginia United Methodist Foundation, a new DVD series called *Living for Giving: A Wesleyan View of Stewardship* is also available. Written and narrated by Bishop Kenneth Carder, this five-part series is designed for small groups and Sunday school classes as well as leaders in stewardship and finance. The cost is \$25, which includes shipping and handling. Free workbooks may be downloaded from the conference Web site at <www.vaumc.org>; select "Resources" then "Stewardship Opportunities."

Hate crimes bill becomes law: The United Methodist Board of Church and Society released a statement celebrating the signing of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. President Obama signed the act into law Oct. 28, more than a decade since it was first introduced. In addition to greater enforcement and protection from hate crimes, this legislation protects free speech and religious liberty. Support for this legislation has come from across the political and theological spectrum. For more information, contact Bill Mefford, director of civil and human rights, General Board of Church and Society, 100 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002; (202) 488-5657.

'Open Hearts...' wins award: The United Methodist Church's advertising tagline – "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors. The people of The United Methodist Church" – was recently selected as best-in-class in the 2009 Getting Attention Nonprofit Tagline Awards. In use since 2001, the tagline has gained new visibility through Rethink Church, the next evolution of the denomination's advertising and welcoming campaign.

U.N. Seminar rescheduled: The United Nations Seminar in New York has been rescheduled for July 27-31, 2010. This opportunity for rising 11th- and 12th-grade youth and college students to explore a Christian response to social justice and global peace issues is sponsored through the General Board of Global Ministries.

Quote of the Week: "People who are in economic development know that the most important stimulus you can invest into a developing economy is to invest in young people." – *Dr. Kendra Creasy Dean, director for the Princeton Theological Seminary Institute for Youth Ministry.*

Unless indicated, all news compiled courtesy of the *Virginia Advocate*, United Methodist News Service, or the United Methodist *Newscope*.