



Worship Resources for 2018 World AIDS Day

UNAIDS has set the 2018 World AIDS Day theme as “Know Your Status”. Let’s join together to lift up those who are living with HIV or AIDS and commit ourselves to reduce new infections. Knowing your status is one big step toward that goal!

Service of Remembrance and Blessing

(Adapted from service held at the United Methodist Breaking Barriers AIDS Conference, 2018)

Centering Words

Today we join together as a Christian community, filled with compassion and concern. We come to remember those who have died of AIDS-related disease, those who have AIDS and those of us who are living with HIV.

We also remember those who are working to stop the AIDS epidemic; those who are caregivers; those who mourn, and those who are working against stigma and discrimination.

May this be a time of healing, reflection, prayer, and a reminder of our call to love our neighbor, to administer justice, and walk humbly as people of God.

Opening Song: “Give Me Jesus”

(African American spiritual. Text and melody are public domain.)

In the morning, when I rise,
in the morning, when I rise, in the morning, when I rise,
give me Jesus.

Refrain:

Give me Jesus.
Give me Jesus.
You may have all this world,
give me Jesus.

Dark midnight was my cry,
dark midnight was my cry,
dark midnight was my cry,
give me Jesus.

Refrain

Oh, when I come to die,

oh, when I come to die,
oh, when I come to die,
give me Jesus.

Refrain

Call to Worship

One: What will it take, O God...

All: for us to see a day of no more AIDS-related deaths, no more new HIV infections and no more discrimination in the land of the living?

One: What will it take, O God...

All: for change to come in our community, in our lives?

One: What will it take, O God...

All: for the scattered to be gathered that all may praise and dance together?

One: What will it take, O God...

All: for us to see the end of AIDS?

One: What will it take, O God...

All: for us, your church, to be free from ignorance and fear?

One: What will it take, O God...

All: for us to recognize your Word become flesh and living among us with HIV?

All: What will it take, O God, for the dance to begin and the deaths to end?

Prayer in Unison

God who comes alongside us and lives within us, we thank you for the privilege of being together at this time and in this place. We pray that your love will unite us into a community of grace and discovery. Please cleanse from us anything that would sap our strength for togetherness. Free us from negative imaginations and the barriers that sometimes keep us apart. In this time refresh in us the dream of a better world and put before us new possibilities for service. Amen

Reading of Scripture | Revelation 21: 1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying:

‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also, he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.’

Reflection

As you reflect, consider the following questions. What words or phrases of promise that come to mind?

- *What comes to mind as you contemplate the new heaven and new earth?
- *What promise does God have for you?
- *What is God's promise for your neighbor?
- *What is God's promise for the world?
- *What is God's promise in relation to HIV and AIDS?
- *What is being made new?
- *What peace do you notice within you?
- *As you breathe, allow your breath to reach this place of peace.
- *Breathe out the old, breathe in the new.
- *Give thanks to God for this time of reflection.

Song of Reflection | "This is My Song" (UMC Hymnal #437)

Memorial Candle

God our Creator, we thank You that You have made each one of us in Your own image and given us gifts and talents with which to serve You and one another. We thank You for those whose lives we have shared and whom we remember today. We thank You for the good we have experienced in them and for the blessing they have been to us.

We confess to you, Lord, that indifference in the guise of ignorance has diverted our eyes from the people and loved ones living with HIV and AIDS. Forgive us and show us new pathways where information and knowledge transform us.

We lift up the people who have died of AIDS-related illnesses; those who were abandoned by their relatives, hurt, unsure, and struggling. May those who still suffer be treated well, feel loved and valued by us as a church.

We lift up the people who live in fear, not daring to give their names, afraid that at any moment someone will discover their secret. Do not let their enemies exult over them; do not let those who wait for you be put to shame.

We light this candle in memory of those whose lives have been taken by HIV/AIDS. May their memory be a blessing. We light this candle to remember and honor those now living with the disease.

We light this candle as a prayer of hope and peace.

At this time, all are invited to come forward and light an individual candle: in honor or memory of a person who has passed or for a person currently living with HIV/AIDS or as a prayer for peace and healing for all affected. Please feel free to spend some time in prayer up front as well.

Declaration of Commitment

One: Church, we are the Body of Christ.

All: The Body of Christ, living with HIV.

One: If we choose, we can make a difference.

All: If we choose, we can help bring newness, hope and peace.

One: In our homes, in our church, in our community, in our nation, in our world...

All: In our bodies, in our minds, in our spirits...

One: Our sisters and brothers, our parents and children are infected with HIV.

All: We are living and dying with AIDS.

One: If we choose, the blockages to healing can be removed.

All: We choose compassion. We choose to respond.

One: Will you respond with your money, with your time, with your love?

All: We are the Body of Christ. We choose to respond until the day of the "last one":

One: The day of the last new HIV infection and the last child born with HIV;

All: The day of the last time that someone is stigmatized or bullied because of HIV and AIDS;

One: The day of the last time that someone dies from this disease.

All: We pray and act for the day of the last one!

Closing Song | "Let There Be Peace on Earth," (UMC Hymnal #431)

Passing of the Peace

As you leave this place, exchange signs of peace and reconciliation with those around you, greeting them in the name of Jesus Christ.

Additional Resources:

*Litany**

Leader: Show us your mercy, Lord,

All: and let your love remain with us.

Reading

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for you are my praise." (Jeremiah 17:14)

Intercession

Pray for all who have HIV and AIDS, as well as people with tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases.

Response

Heavenly Creator, maker of all things good, listen to our prayers for our brothers and sisters who have HIV and AIDS, as well as those with other diseases. We pray for those who do not have access to the treatment they need and deserve. Show compassion by granting them healing. Amen.

Closing

Leader: Bless the works of our hands.

All: Heal us and fill us with your blessed assurance

*Mennonite Central Committee, WORLD AIDS DAY 2018

Litany for World AIDS Day

What will it take, O God, for us to see the vision fulfilled in the land of the living?

What will it take, O God, for the change to come in our community, in our lives?

What will it take, O God, for the scattered to be gathered so all may praise and dance together?
What will it take, O God, to free our siblings from HIV and AIDS?
What will it take, O God, for us to recognize your Word become flesh living among us with AIDS?
What will it take, O God, for the dance to begin, treatments to continue and the deaths to end?
We pray in the strong name of Jesus who lives among us and in us and through us all.
Amen.

Prayer:

Spirit of the living God, you breathe on all that is. You lead us from the places of pain and difficulty to your cool living waters of health and wholeness. Through you every tear is wiped away and we are transformed by your wellsprings of life.

We praise you, O God, and give you thanks for the gift of life and the life-giving power of your Spirit, which renews and refreshes us with hope.

We thank you that by the life-giving power of your spirit you bestowed upon us, your people, such gifts as are needed to respond to the situation at hand. Pour on us all that we need to stop AIDS and reach out to everyone affected with compassion, healing and hope.

May we know your call to be leaders in this struggle and employ the courage, wisdom and resources you have given to respond to HIV and AIDS.

We pray for the leadership of those living with or affected by HIV and give thanks for the courage you give us to share our stories. We thank you that our stories raise awareness, invite solidarity and challenge us to join with one another in the struggle.

May we know your call to be leaders in this struggle and employ the courage, wisdom and resources you have given to respond to HIV and AIDS.

We pray for your church. Be with us and guide us as we respond to the needs of persons living with or affected by HIV and AIDS. We pray especially for our pastors and lay leaders as they provide pastoral services. Inspire and empower them to provide the leadership our faith community needs to respond effectively.

May we know your call to be leaders in this struggle and employ the courage, wisdom and resources you have given to respond to HIV and AIDS.

We pray for our public officials. Be with them and guide them in their response to HIV and AIDS. Give them courage, wisdom and resources that they may create effective and just public policies so that everyone may receive the information they need to stop the spread of HIV and everyone may access the treatment and care required for their health and wholeness.

May we know your call to be leaders in this struggle and employ the courage, wisdom and resources you have given to respond to HIV and AIDS.

We give you thanks, O God, that you have raised-up leaders throughout the ages - reluctant leaders, courageous leaders, surprising leaders, humble leaders, servant leaders—bestowing on each one gifts for service. Raise-up among us such leaders today who will create universal access to medical treatment and health care, effective education and prevention programs, advocacy for strong and just public policy, and the funds and other resources needed to stop AIDS.

May we know your call to be leaders in this struggle and employ the courage, wisdom and resources you have given to respond to HIV and AIDS. Amen.

(A Litany for World AIDS Day 2007 was written by the Rev. Lori Tisher, Intern in the Health and Wholeness Advocacy Ministries of Wider Church Ministries, a Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ. Used with permission)

Prayer

Let us pray, God of all compassion:

Comfort your family members who live with HIV. Spread over us all your quilt of mercy, love and peace. Open our eyes to your presence reflected in their faces. Open our ears to your truth echoing in their hearts. Give us the strength to weep with the grieving, to walk with the lonely, to stand with the depressed.

May our love mirror your love for those who live in fear, who live under stress and who suffer rejection. Comforting, healing God grant rest to those who have died and hope to all who live with HIV. God of life, help us to find the cure now and help us to build a world in which no one dies alone and where everyone lives accepted, wanted and loved. We pray in your name. Amen.

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