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### Greetings from Bishop Julius Trimble, UMGAC Chair

The United Methodist Church is going through a rough time right now as it grapples with its position on human sexuality. This is a long-standing struggle - one requiring not only education, but also prayerful discernment and Bible study in relationship with others. Those of us addressing the HIV/AIDS issue in the church are well aware of how stigma and discrimination can damage one's body, spirit and soul. Most of us are wounded human beings seeking love and affirmation as well as joy in our lives.

As the UMC continues to wrestle with who to accept or not, and as the UMC Global AIDS Committee wrestles with ongoing stigma against those living with HIV, let us try as hard as we can to extend love and compassion to all God's people. Isn't that really our mandate as Christians? Food for thought.

Be encouraged!  
Bishop Julius C. Trimble, UMGAC Chair



An educator from the Alliance Biblique de Côte d'Ivoire conducts a public health lesson on AIDS in the sanctuary at Jerusalem Parish United Methodist Church in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire in this November 2008 file photo

### Dealing with AIDS in West Africa ABIDJAN, Côte d'Ivoire (UMNS)

A May 19-21 summit in Côte d'Ivoire will encourage United Methodists in the West Africa Central Conference to create their own plans of action for the continuing health crisis related to HIV and AIDS. The event is sponsored by the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee.

As the hub of the denomination's healthcare system in Côte d'Ivoire, Dabou Methodist Hospital offers general medical, surgical and dental care and is known for its maternity ward. Patients also come for treatment of HIV/AIDS, as participants in the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee West Africa Summit will discover when they visit the hospital the day before the May 19-21 workshop

[More info...](#)



Hand-sewn quilt from *Breaking Barriers* Conference. The quilt includes prayers and words of commitments from some of the conference attendees. The quilt was created by Rebecca Manifold.

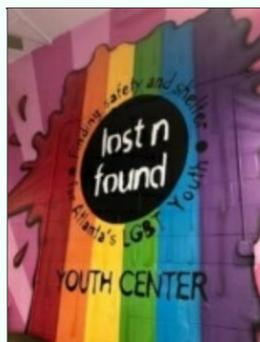
UMGAC members shown (left to right): Kathy Griffith, GBGM; Doug Smith, Secretary; Bishop Trimble, Chair; Anne Gatobu, At-Large, and Linda Bales Todd, Consultant.

### UMC Global AIDS Committee Meets in Atlanta

The 10-person UMC Global AIDS Committee (UMGAC) met April 22-24, 2019 in Atlanta for its bi-annual meeting. A major agenda item was to discuss its workplan for the next quadrennium. Consensus was reached on the vital need for ongoing education and advocacy regarding HIV & AIDS in the United States given the spikes of infections in populations of color and ongoing stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

UMGAC will identify ways to expand its educational efforts as well as advocating for just public policies regarding HIV/AIDS. UMGAC will continue working closely with the UMC Board of Global Ministries on addressing HIV/AIDS in the global context. Additionally, UMGAC will be exploring ongoing funding sources for its work.

We are grateful for your support and covet your prayers...always.



### UMGAC visits *Lost and Found Youth* in Atlanta

*Lost and Found Youth Drop-In Center* is located in a strip mall on the northeast side of Atlanta and is *partially funded through a domestic AIDS grant from the UMC General Board of Global Ministries.*

This organization "exists to end homelessness for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) and all sexual minority youth."

Recently, UMGAC members visited this project and met with three staff persons who believe everyone has potential in spite of the struggles they may be facing. *Lost and Found* provides a safe place for straight or LGBTQ+ youth 13 years of age up to 25.

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[Stories by Youth](#)



.U=U means "Undetectable = Untransmittable," indicating that if an HIV-positive person is on HIV meds (antiretroviral therapy, or ART) with a consistently undetectable HIV viral load, the HIV virus cannot be transmitted to a sex partner.

### Landmark Study on HIV Treatment and Transmission: U=U

recently published article in the *Lancet Medical Journal* reported the results of an 8-year study of HIV positive men who took their meds regularly and, in time the HIV virus became undetectable rendering it incapable of being transmitted. This is good news for all people living with HIV who have access to drug treatment.

This study underscores the importance of knowing your status and, if HIV positive, seeking treatment as soon as possible.

[Read the Article](#)

## My Heroes in the Book of Ezra



*"As for me, I desire a faith that draws the circle wide and emphasizes love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness."*

Jim Winkler,  
President and General Secretary  
National Council of Churches

I did not go to seminary, and I do not have formal theological training. However, like many, I have engaged in Bible study for years and am a daily Bible reader. There are passages in the Bible I find quizzical, disappointing, infuriating, beautiful, and humorous.

One example of Scripture's multi-faceted appeal is found in the 9th and 10th chapters of the Book of Ezra. At the outset of the Book of Ezra, King Cyrus of Persia permits the Jews living in exile to return to Jerusalem to "rebuild the house of the Lord in Jerusalem (1:3)." 50,000 or so were permitted to make the journey home.

They returned and lived "in dread of the neighboring peoples (3:3)." When the "adversaries" heard the returned exiles were building a temple, they asked if they could help, "for we worship your God as you do and we have been sacrificing to him... (4:2)." But the response was, "You shall have no part with us in building a house to our God... (4:3)." Even though they worshiped the same God, they believed their life experience kept them apart. What a lost opportunity!

[More info...](#)

## "Facing the Heartbreak of Youth Suicide: What can we do to help?"

By Donald Messer (Edited)

*My heart breaks when I hear a friend tell me her grandson has tried to commit suicide twice. When asked, "why?" he said simply, "Because I'm bi-sexual." The bias and stigma of church & society becomes internalized. In the United States, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24. Lesbian, gay and bi-sexual youth seriously contemplate suicide at almost three times the rate of heterosexual youth. The rate for transgendered youth is higher.*

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- Gilead Sciences, Inc has agreed to donate pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medication for up to 200,000 individuals each year for up to 11 years? PrEP is used to reduce the risk of HIV infection in individuals who are at higher risk for HIV. It has been shown to reduce the risk of new infection by up to 97 percent when taken consistently. [Read More](#)

### Did You Know that...

- **Antiretroviral therapy may soon be obsolete**, as scientists have successfully used immune cells to kick the dormant form of HIV out of its hiding place and destroy it. The findings may soon lead to an HIV vaccine. [Read More](#)
- Among people living with HIV in the US, 1 in 10 also live with hepatitis B and 1 in 4 live with hepatitis C? Find resources along with quick facts about HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. [Read More](#)
- Things we say or do might hurt others and, many times we don't know we have hurt them? These are called "microaggressions". Read about how microaggressions can affect people living with HIV or AIDS. [Read More](#)

## UMGAC Advance supports vital projects around the globe!

If you want to make a real difference in the HIV/AIDS issue globally, consider contributing to the UMC Global AIDS Fund Advance. These funds go directly to programs help prevent the spread of HIV from mother to child and other facets of prevention. UMGAF projects in Sierra Leone, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi and the Philippines support HIV testing, education, referrals for treatment and training of community volunteers and other services.

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## ABOUT UMGAC

The United Methodist Global AIDS Committee is funded through The United Methodist Church. We are grateful for its support as well as the various UMC agencies that support our work: The Council of Bishops, General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Women, Division on Ministries with Young People, General Commission on Communication.

[More info...](#)

## The United Methodist Global AIDS Committee

faithfully works to engage annual conferences and local churches in HIV/AIDS education and advocacy and loving and compassionate outreach by raising awareness and providing faith-based resources and training.

By doing this, we aim to eliminate deaths from HIV and AIDS, reduce stigma and advocate for and affirm persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS around the world.

Adopted by UMGAC, April 23, 2019



General Board of Church & Society 100 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002  
umgafund@gmail.com - www.umglobalaidsfund.com  
We sent out this message from the United Methodist Church  
If you no longer wish to receive these emails, simply email umgafund@gmail.com  
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