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Word from Bishop Trimble

Greetings! Jesus drew the circle wide! He didn't limit himself to a small group of people who thought or behaved exactly like him. We, as Christians, are called draw the circle wide as well.

How can we ensure our congregations welcome all people – including those living with HIV or AIDS? What steps can all of us take to strengthen our AIDS ministries by making sure we receive and listen to those who may feel marginalized?

Jesus provides a road map even though it is one that may make us uncomfortable. If we are going to tackle and eliminate stigma and discrimination, extending hospitality to all is a great first step.

Be encouraged,
Bishop Julius C. Trimble,
UMGAC Chair



UMGAC Meets with the Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis

As we think about our HIV and AIDS ministries, we know how important it is to have partners to strengthen and expand our efforts. Last week, the UMC Global AIDS Committee met with the Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis – an organization that funds various AIDS-related efforts in Indy.



Front Row: (l-r) Kathy Griffith, Linda Bales Todd, Jerry Burkman, Laurie Blackburn; Back Row: (l-r) John Hill, William Brawner, Bishop Julius Trimble, Don Messer, Steve Everett, Doug Smith

Mr. Steve Everett, Vice President of Programs, and Laurie Blackburn, Director of Community Engagement, shared information about the programs supported by the Foundation which has been in existence since 1985. Much of the Foundation's funding comes from fundraisers linking forces with Indy-based organizations. State money is also funneled through the Foundation.

1. Two key gap/challenges were raised during our conversation: increased harm reduction efforts are needed
2. Increased services to and with young people living with HIV. Learn more about the Foundation. We're grateful for their work

[Read about the Foundation](#)



Agbor Bertile

HIV Stigmatization is a thread to HIV Status Awareness

by Agbor Bertile

Growing as a young person in Cameroon, I heard different stories about HIV/AIDS. The picture I painted about HIV was so frightening that the thoughts of staying close to an HIV patient was unimaginable due to fear of contracting HIV.

The most discussed mode of HIV transmission was through sexual intercourse and promiscuous behaviour, and, as a young person, being HIV positive or getting tested was a taboo as it was quickly associated with you engaging in sexual activities.

[Read All of Agbor's Article](#)

Chinese Whistleblower Who Spoke Out about China's HIV Scandal has Died

According to a September BBC article, Dr Shuping Wang, 59, has died. She was a hero due to her revelations about contaminated blood banks in Chinese province of Henan.

After reporting her findings, she was sharply criticized, but she persisted. She later began to expose the high HIV rates, but, again, was ostracized. Eventually, her findings were affirmed and, as a result, all future blood donations were tested for HIV. Hampstead Theatre is now featuring a play about her life and work. We're grateful for Dr. Wang's bravery and her advocacy for those living with HIV and AIDS.

UMGAC, through its Advance Special, has funded a project in China focusing on migrant and sex workers, but due to lack of the project's ability to follow-up with clients, the grant has not been renewed.



Dr Shuping Wang (Photo: BBC.com)

"Speaking out cost me my job, my marriage and my happiness at the time, but it also helped save the lives of thousands and thousands of people."

(Quote from an interview with the Hampstead Theatre website.)

[Read BBC Article on Dr. Wang](#)



World AIDS Day
December 1, 2019

"Communities Make the Difference"

Theme for 2019 World AIDS Day

"Communities contribute to the AIDS response in many different ways. Their leadership and advocacy ensure that the response remains relevant and grounded, keeping people at the centre and leaving no one behind."

Communities include peer educators, networks of people living with or affected by HIV, such as gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs and sex workers, women and young people, counsellors, community health workers, door-to-door service providers, civil society organizations and grass-roots activists."

(Source: UNAIDS)

What can we do to commemorate World AIDS Day?

- Sponsor an educational event in your local congregation. HIV & AIDS education is still needed especially for young people.
- Pass out red ribbons - the universal symbol of awareness of, support for and solidarity with people living with HIV.
- Invite a person living with HIV to share his/her/their story in a Sunday School or with your entire congregation.
- Ask your Episcopal leader to share his/her statement on HIV and AIDS with all the local congregations.
- Organize a testing site in partnership with your local health department.
- Take up an offering for the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Advance Special #982345.
- Pray for people living with HIV or AIDS and their loved ones.

[World AIDS Day Resources](#)



RESOURCES

"Let Us Stamp our Stigma"

A training curriculum for clergy and laity. Produced by the Indiana Annual Conference (Updated 2019)

[Download](#)

"Sermon Seeds"

The United Church of Christ provides sermon starters for those interested in preaching on HIV & AIDS. Check out the Sermon Seeds Facebook page.

[Download](#)

"SEX: A Christian Perspective on Our Bodies, Decisions, and Relationships"

United Methodist sexuality curriculum for 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Consider sponsoring a class in your local church.

[Download](#)



Don Messer with Shirley Whipple Struchen, (Religious Communications Council)

CHALLENGE FOR UNITED METHODISTS TO GET ENGAGED IN ENDING HIV

By Donald E. Messer

In Washington, D.C., September 5, Christians gathered with others at a faith pre-conference prior to the United States Conference on HIV and AIDS (USCA).

Among items discussed was the announced target of President Donald Trump to end HIV in America by 2013. Skeptics question whether this effort is serious, because of political attacks on Medicaid, anti-gay policies, the political/cultural tone of the southern states where HIV is increasing. But President Trump keeps promising at his campaign rallies that this is his goal, and his constituents cheer his remarks.

Major financial legislation is being developed that targets 57 areas of the United States and churches are being asked to become involved. The government has identified these geographic hotspots for HIV.

[Read Full Article](#)

SAVE the DATE!

UMGAC is sponsoring a one-day HIV/AIDS conference May 4, 2020 at Hennepin United Methodist Church in Minneapolis, MN which is the day prior to the 2020 UMC General Conference.

This event is open to all. More info will be released in the coming months! If you will be attending the 2020 General

Upcoming 2019 AIDS Retreats

Several UMC Annual Conferences sponsor annual HIV/AIDS retreats. Please check out this resource for information about those coming up this year! These events offer education, recreation and spiritual and psychic renewal for people living with HIV. We celebrate those who organize and sponsor these retreats!

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More info...

Prayers for those living with HIV or AIDS

2018 United Methodist Breaking Barriers Conference



United Church of Christ



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

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.



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