



Worship Resource for 2019 World AIDS Day

Communities Make the Difference!

UNAIDS has set the 2019 World AIDS Day theme as “Communities Make the Difference”. We know any social justice movement is made stronger by working in partnership with others. Various sectors in communities are coming together around the globe to stem the tide of HIV & AIDS. What is happening in your community? How can your faith organizations be a part of those partnerships? Where is God leading us as communities of faith?

We offer this sample worship service to you as you commemorate World AIDS Day. Please feel free to adapt these resources for your own respective faith organization or gathering.

Centering

Oh, how we need one another, O God! We need each other in order to become whole and to become your faithful servants working for peace with justice.

Help us, in this quiet time, reflect on our community. What can we do to make it stronger? What partners might we engage to reduce HIV infections and ensure access to testing and treatment for all people who need it? What steps do we need to take to get to know our neighbors and send a message of love and compassion?

We know you walk with us on this journey. We know you love us and all people no matter who we are or where we come from. Help us embrace one another as we create new partnerships of hope, redemption and healing.

Opening Song | “Help Us Accept Each Other” (United Methodist Hymnal, p. 560, by Fred Kaan)

Help us accept each other
as Christ accepted us;
teach us as sister, brother,
each person to embrace.
Be present, Lord, among us
and Bring us to believe:
we are ourselves accepted
and meant to love and live.

Teach us, O Lord, your lessons,
as in our daily life
we struggle to be human
and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people,

for all - not just for some,
to love them as we find them
or as they may become.

Let your acceptance change us
so that we may be moved
in living situations
to do the truth in love;
to practice your acceptance
until we know by heart
the table of forgiveness
and laughter's healing art.

Lord, for today's encounters
with all who are in need,
who hunger for acceptance,
for justice and for bread,
we need new eyes for seeing,
new hands for holding on:
renew us with your Spirit;
Lord, free us, make us one!

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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?

Litany for World AIDS Day:

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.)

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 and your community?
- *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 Celebration | Many Gifts, One Spirit (United Methodist Hymnal p. 114; by Al Carmines)

God of change and glory, God of time and space,
When we fear the future, give to us your grace.
In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.

Refrain:

Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways.
In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise
One Giver, one Lord, one Spirit, one Word
Known in many ways, hallowing our days.
For the Giver, for the gifts, praise, praise, praise!

God of many colors, God of many signs,
You have made us different, blessing many kinds.
As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear.

Freshness of the morning, newness of each night,
You are still creating endless love and light.
This we see, as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart.

Prayer for World AIDS Day

Today we commemorate World AIDS Day.

God, open our eyes to the systems around us that oppress, hold down, and disadvantage the most vulnerable in our society, so that we may increase and abound in our love for one another and for all people.

God, open our ears to the myths, stereotypes, and lies that keep these systems going, so that we may increase and abound in our love for one another and for all people.

God, open our mouths to challenging conversations about race, sex, and differences, so that we may increase and abound in our love for one another and for all people.

God, open our hearts to the understanding that we are all affected by HIV/AIDS, so that we may increase and abound in our love for one another and for all people.

(This prayer first appeared in a bulletin insert for World AIDS Day created by the United Church of Canada. General Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church)

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 adapted)

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.
Let There Be Peace on Earth
The peace that was meant to be

With God as Creator
Family all are we.
Let me walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry step I take
Let this be my solemn vow
To take each moment and live
Each moment in peace eternally.

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

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.

Closing Prayer:

A Prayer for Holistic Healing for People Living with HIV/AIDS

God of mercy and justice: Heal us from the ravages of HIV and AIDS that deplete immunity and make your children vulnerable to opportunistic infections.

Heal us Lord. Have mercy on us.

Heal broken hearts and relieve the grief that pains spirits and minds and leaves many to wonder about the meaning of life.

Heal us Lord. Have mercy on us.

Heal the psychological pain of HIV and AIDS, and the fear and hopelessness that can engulf and lead some to die before the virus kills.

Heal us Lord. Have mercy on us.

Heal the social stigma and discrimination that results in uncompassionate acts of isolation, and failure to provide quality care and prevention.

Heal us Lord. Have mercy on us.

Heal unhealthy relations that expose partners and spouses to HIV and AIDS infection, and renders some powerless to protect themselves.

Heal us Lord. Have mercy on us.

Heal the poverty that exposes millions to HIV and AIDS. Heal the exploitative social structures that condemn many to poverty and expose them to infection.

Heal us Lord. Have mercy on us.

Heal the violence that spreads HIV and AIDS. Heal the ethnic and civil wars. Heal domestic violence and the rape of women and children.

Heal us Lord. Make us and your church the instruments of your healing. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer for people living with HIV/AIDS published by Church World Service. Adaptation by the Reverend James Moos, Executive Minister of UCC Wider Church Ministries and Co-Executive of Global Ministries, a partnership of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Compiled by the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee 2019