

# Breaking Barriers AIDS Conference: Tackling Stigma

## The United Methodist Global AIDS Committee

First United Methodist Church - Charlotte, North Carolina

8:30 a.m.	<b>Registration</b>	Narthex
9 a.m.-10	<b>Welcome</b>	Sanctuary

Greetings from the leadership at FUMC Charlotte; Rev. Dr. Sunny Farley, UM Global AIDS Coordinator, from Flint, Texas; and Dr. Donald E. Messer, UMGAC member, founder and executive director of the Center for Health and Hope.

### Opening Worship

(Order of worship adapted from the Empowering Lives: Bridging Hope through Empowering Care HIV and AIDS Conference held at Wesleyan University-Philippines March 14, 2024)

Prelude - *Steven Branyon, Organist*

INVOCATION (Stand, as you are able)

Linda Bales Todd, former consultant for the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee

**Leader:** Lord, we acknowledge your presence with us today and always!

**People:** Bless the Lord, O my soul, Bless the Lord, O my soul.

And all that is within me bless His holy name.

**Leader:** Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,  
Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,  
Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. (Psalm 103:1-4)

**People:** Bless the Lord, O my soul, Bless the Lord, O my soul.

And all that is within me bless His holy name.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down, Fix in us Thy humble dwelling; all Thy faithful mercies crown! Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love Thou art; visit us with Thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast! Let us all in Thee inherit, let us find the promised rest. Take away our love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be; end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver; let us all Thy life receive; Suddenly return and never, nevermore Thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as thy hosts above; pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then, Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be; Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee. Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

OPENING PRAYER – Rev. Cimpaye Valentine, District Superintendent, Burundi Annual Conference

**Leader:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the gift available to everyone without exception,

**People:** the love of God, who claims each person equally as a child in the image of the divine,

**Leader:** and the communion of the Holy Spirit, through whom we breathe in life, and connect to all others breathing, is with us, as we gather honoring the compassion of the Blessed Trinity, one God, now and forever. (pause)

What will it take, O God,

**People:** for us to see the vision fulfilled in the land of the living?

**Leader:** What will it take, O God,

**People:** for the change to come in our community, and in our lives?

**Leader:** What will it take, O God,

**People:** for the scattered to be gathered so all may praise and dance together?

**Leader:** What will it take, O God,

**People:** to faithfully accompany our siblings with HIV and AIDS?

**Leader:** What will it take, O God,

**People:** for the dance to begin, treatments to continue, and deaths to end?

**Leader:** We pray in the strong name of Jesus who lives within and among us. Amen.

(Adapted from ecumenical Advocacy Alliance resources, Liturgy 2014)

**READING FROM COLOSSIANS 3:12 -17 and PRAYER – UMGAC members Dr. Doug Smith, Rev. Dr. Youngsook Charlene Kang and Cecelia Williams**

**Reader 1:** My soul pleads for mercy; my heart is saddened by the stigma and discrimination around me, against me, and in me. Who will listen as I scream? Who will see my tears? No one but you, Oh God, my source of strength, for you have chosen me. (Reflective Silence)

**Reader 2:** You have seen our weaknesses and strengths. Let your voice bring hope from the highest mountain top. Let your spirit take over us. HIV has taken over our blood, but it has not taken our spirits away. It has not taken our joy away. It has not taken our voices away. Instead, God has entrusted us to be the voice. Lord, you know we will fall.

You know we will stumble along the way. You know our heart's desires. You know our heart's temptations. You know our thoughts and our every steps. (Reflective Silence)

**Reader 3:** Pick us up when we fall. Feed us when we are hungry. Quench us when we are thirsty. Clothe us when we are naked. Love will overcome HIV and AIDS. Love will be our source of strength. Love is unconditional and with no limits. Love is food and a pure essence for the soul, the mind and the spirit. Love does not separate, discriminate, hate, or judge. Love taught us to embrace our diseases, to bring life and hope to those who have lost it. Together with love, we can overcome. Together with love, our voices will be heard. Together with love, we can end this epidemic. It is a promise! Amen!

(Adapted from Embrace Your Afflictions written by Rev. Kerolos Saleib, United Methodist Communication <http://www.umc.org/videos>)

**SONG RESPONSE** (Stand, as you are able)

**We Shall Overcome**

We shall overcome, We shall overcome,  
We shall overcome, someday.  
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe  
We shall overcome, someday.

We'll walk hand in hand, We'll walk hand in hand,  
We'll walk hand in hand, today.  
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe  
We shall overcome someday.

We shall live in peace, We shall live in peace,  
We shall live in peace, today.  
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,  
We shall overcome, someday.

We are not afraid, Oh, Lord, We are not afraid, Oh, Lord,  
We are not afraid, today. Oh, deep in my heart  
I do believe, We shall overcome, someday.

We shall overcome Oh, Lord, We shall overcome Oh, Lord,  
We shall overcome someday. Oh, deep in my heart  
I do believe, We shall overcome someday.

**SCRIPTURE: John 21:15-19**

**SERMON: Jesus Loves You!**

**Bishop Julius C. Trimble, Episcopal Leader of the Indiana Conference, General Secretary-Elect of the Board of Church and Society, and UMGAC Chair**

**BLESSING OF THE HANDS – Bishop Trimble**

(The assembly is invited to hold out their hands with their palms up.)

God bless your hands with strength to support and advocate for justice.

God bless your hands with steadiness to seek the knowledge leading to better prevention and treatment, and eventually, a cure.

God bless your hands with openness to reach through stigma with welcome and reconciliation.

God bless your hands with tenderness to care for all who mourn.

God bless your hands with other hands to hold.

The journey is long, but we walk together in hope and love.

Empower us this day, O Lord, and in the days to come, bringing hope to people through compassionate care.

Through Jesus our Lord, the greatest Healer. Amen.

Please remain in the sanctuary for the keynote address.

# Bishop Fritz and Etta Mae Mutti Family Lecture on Global HIV

**Keynote Speaker: Ulysses W. Burley, III, MD**

11 a.m.-11:10 a.m.

Break

Snacks and drinks will be provided. Restrooms are available downstairs.

11:15 a.m.

Break-Out Sessions

*What are the Barriers Yet to Be Broken?*

(Please choose one)

1. HIV & AIDS and Aging – Dr. Doug Smith, PhD, Dmin, UMGAC member – sanctuary
2. Women and HIV & AIDS, Cecelia Williams, UMGAC member representing United Women in Faith and featuring UMGAC Vice-chair Rev. Dr. Youngsook Charlene Kang and UMGAC member, Kathleen Griffith with the General Board of Global Ministries – Room 111
3. Overlooked Key Populations – Christopher Hucks-Ortiz, MPH, community-based HIV prevention researcher and HIV & AIDS expert with Don Messer, convenor – Fellowship Hall
4. PrEP and Other Preventions – Dr. Tagbo Ekwonu, family medicine physician at Eastowne Family Physicians, in Charlotte, NC. with Rev. Dr. Sunny Farley, convenor – Room 116

Noon

***Lunch and Global AIDS Leadership Awards Ceremony*** – Fellowship Hall

1:30

**ACTION Panel: *United Methodist Global Responses*** – Sanctuary

Moderator: John Hill, interim secretary of the General Board of Church and Society and member of UMGAC

Panelists:

Dr. Doug Smith, UMGAC member - HIV in the U.S. and international HIV education efforts.

Rev. Dr. Anne Gatobu, UMGAC member, and Cimpaye Valentine - UMC responses in Africa

Jennifer Ferariza-Meneses, executive secretary of the Board of Women's Work of the Philippines Central Conference - UMC responses in Asia

Rev. Camille Henderson-Edwards, Director for Economic, Health and Gender Justice at the Global Board of Church and Society - Board Strategies and Making the Most of the UMC Connection

2:30 p.m.

## Closing Worship

*Sanctuary*

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#### The United Methodist Global AIDS Committee

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#### PRELUDE

#### PRAYER OF PETITION – Kathleen Griffith

**Leader: What can we do together to keep those who suffer in any way from HIV and AIDS, in the forefront of our hearts, minds and prayers?**

**Leader:** For those who have no food to keep their immune systems functioning,  
For those who are afraid to be tested lest they have the dreaded virus,  
For those who have no access to clinics, to anti-retroviral drugs

**Response: Spirit of God, give us hearts to respond.**

**Leader:** For those who have no money to buy their needs,  
For those who have no identity documents to secure basic grants, and to exercise their rights,  
For those who feel alone and afraid because of their HIV and AIDS status

**Response: Spirit of God, give us hearts to respond.**

**Leader:** For those without strength to raise their own children,  
For grandmothers and children raising orphans

**Response: Spirit of God, give us hearts to respond.**

**Leader:** For doctors and nurses serving in clinics and hospitals under stressful conditions,  
For volunteers who face overwhelming problems without means to help,  
For ourselves who can make a difference by support and advocacy

**Response: Spirit of God, give us hearts to respond.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE:** (Stand, as you are able)

#### **Breathe on me Breath of God**

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
fill me with life anew,  
that I may love the way you love,  
and do what you would do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
until my heart is pure,

until my will is one with yours,  
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
so shall I never die,  
but live with you the perfect life  
for all eternity.

**SCRIPTURE:** Ezekiel 37:1-14, Act-s 2: 7 -21

**SERMON:** The Dream of a Common Language  
**Bishop Karen Oliveto, Episcopal Leader of the Mountain Sky Conference**

**PRAYER –**

Merciful Lord God, constant source of all healing, we give you thanks for all your gifts of strength and life, and above all we thank you for your Son, through whom we have health and salvation. Help us by your Holy Spirit to be assured of your power in our lives and to trust in your eternal love; through Jesus Christ, we pray.

**Amen.**

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**HYMN: Here I am, Lord** (Stand, as you are able)

I, the Lord of sea and sky  
I have heard my people cry  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save  
I have made the stars of night  
I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?  
Here I am, Lord  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord  
If You lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart

I, the Lord of wind and flame  
I will tend the poor and lame  
I will set a feast for them  
My hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide  
'Til their hearts be satisfied

I will give my life to them  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord  
If You lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart  
I will hold Your people in my heart

**CLOSING PRAYER** - Patrick Abro, former UMGAC member, Global Ministries  
Missionary/Health Operations Manager – Burundi UMC

Loving God, we lift all those suffering from HIV and AIDS: bring your healing and restoration to their bodies, minds and spirits. Lead us to do whatever it will take to eradicate this illness from the lives of those who are touched by it, both directly and indirectly. We offer you the proceedings of our activity this day. In prayer, we are trusting in you and the strength of your Spirit, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer by the National African-American Catholic HIV/AIDS Task Force)

***Closing Words & Benediction*** - Dr. Don Messer

Eternal God, as your disciples we return to our daily lives better able to sustain one another and more intent on extending your healing presence. We leave mindful of your care and love so that we may live faithfully each day. In sharing one another's lives, we've grown stronger. We are more filled with depth and integrity. We have been driven to love and care by a loving, caring God. Now we go into the world with the peace of Christ, the love of God and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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