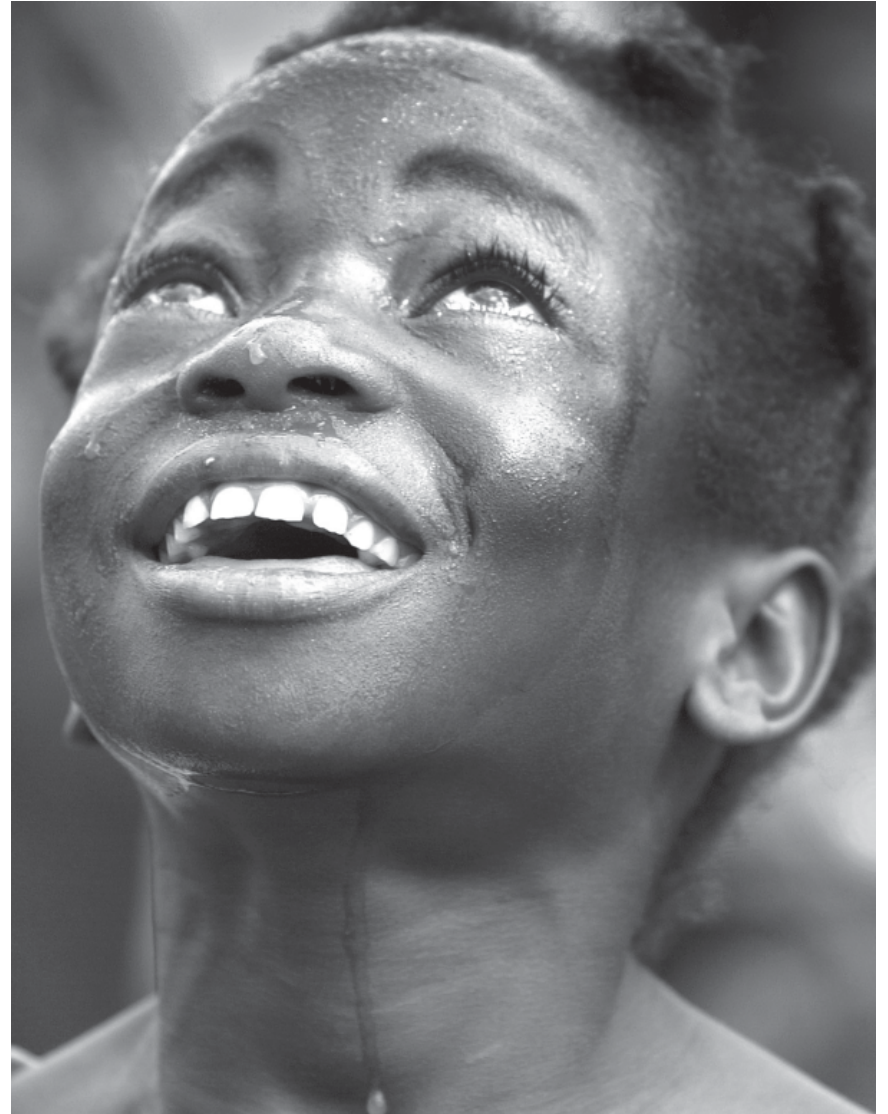


PARTNERSHIP FOR LIFE

LIFE *without* AIDS

worship resource



ANDREW STAWICKI, PHOTOSENSITIVE/CARE



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introduction to worship service

"It need not be."

HAVE YOU EVER stopped to imagine what life would be like without AIDS?

HIV/AIDS is a global pandemic that affects us all.

Exacerbating emergencies, reversing development gains, and creating new crises on a global scale, AIDS is more than just a health issue, it is a social, economic and justice issue.

Building life without AIDS is more than just teaching how to stop the transmission of HIV. It is also about working together against poverty, stigma, and human rights violations that not only accompany AIDS, but also contribute to the spread of HIV. It is about providing access to health care, education and jobs for all. It is reaching out in love to others, so that all people can live life to the fullest, with hope for today and tomorrow.

In June 2004, Stephen Lewis, Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa appointed by the United Nations, addressed the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. While outlining the terrifying reach and present consequences of the AIDS pandemic, he pleaded for the church's commitment to the brave and courageous struggle against HIV/AIDS:

And it is only now, over 20 years into the pandemic, that the world is beginning to understand the ferocious assault on humankind. And it seems to me to be of inestimable importance that the religious community which has access to such huge numbers in all populations on a regular basis, and a religious community which is driven by decent human motive and instincts should be very, very deeply engaged in resisting the force of the pandemic, and in educating the broad populace about issues of prevention, and treatment, and care and support...

It need not be. I beg you to understand, it need not be. And one of the ways we can stem this ferocious tide, one of the ways we can introduce true elements of humanity into a constellation that verges

on hope but struggles with despair, is to provide the religious leadership, to recognize in this country that those who are living with AIDS, even with anti-retroviral drugs, are still coping with regimens which cause many unhappy side effects and still don't prevent the foreshortening of life. And religious sensibility, decency and compassion can smooth the way for people who are fighting for place, and respect, and decency and human rights. But broaden that to the world and your influence can be infinite.

Moving towards life without AIDS is possible, but there is much to do. As we seek to follow Christ, let us work together so that one day we can all rejoice that we live in a world without AIDS.

Our church supports partners around the world working for life without AIDS. Let us follow the lead of all who struggle with HIV/AIDS and support partners by using this worship service to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in corporate prayer and worship.

This worship service has been produced ecumenically by The Anglican Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and The United Church of Canada.

readings

The readings focus on restoration, hope, vision and thanksgiving. Additional scripture readings: 1 Corinthians 12.12-27 (You are the body of Christ)
John 13.31-35 (Love one another)

children's story

approach 1—Tell the story of Grace, Mary and their grandmother Rhoda from “Children in Charge” on the back of the Partnership for Life place mat. Close with a prayer for Grace, Mary and Rhoda.

approach 2—Using the poster, bulletin cover or place mat pictures, explain that the child in the centre is part of a family that cares for one another without parents, that sometimes the oldest child in such a family may be as young as eight years old. Ask them what they see about fear and hope in the child's face. Close with a prayer that offers those fears and hopes to God.

homily/reflection

See reflection on page 13, “Towards a Life without AIDS.”

Check out these Web sites and resources for more material for the reflection:

- National church websites: www.presbyterian.ca/pwswd/ www.pwrdf.org, www.united-church.ca;
- <http://gs2004.anglican.ca/news/webcast/highlights.htm>;
- 2004 PWRDF video “For a Generation Without AIDS” is an address by Stephen Lewis to the 2004 Anglican General Synod. His overview is thorough, moving and challenging;
- A theological reflection on AIDS by Chris Ferguson of the United Church of Canada is available at <http://www.united-church.ca/beads/theologicalreflection.shtm>.

music

We offer some newer songs that can be sung to familiar tunes, but also provide suggestions of traditional hymns that are appropriate. Some additional hymns include:

- *Healer of Our Every Ill* (612 *Common Praise*, 619 *Voices United*)
- *Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness* (397 *Common Praise*)
- *Nothing Can Trouble* (568 *Common Praise*, 290 *Voices United*, 617 *Book of Praise*)
- *Our Darkness is Never Darkness* (549 *Common Praise*)

Hymn numbers provided in this service refer to the following hymnbooks commonly used in Anglican, United and Presbyterian Churches in Canada:

- *Voices United: The Hymn and Worship Book of The United Church of Canada*. 1996;
- *The Book of Praise*. The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1997;
- *Common Praise*. Anglican Church of Canada. 1998.

preparation of space

Something as simple as a length of African fabric draped at the lectern can signal the widening horizon of our concern and prayer for the world.

You are invited to photocopy the following six-page worship service for use in your congregation. Leaders may want to use the prayer of intercession and reflection that follow the service outline.

Worship Service

partnership for life worship service

call to worship

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. 1 Corinthians 12.26 (New Revised Standard Version)

opening hymn

In Christ There Is No East or West
484 *Common Praise*, 606 *Voices United*, 480 *Book of Praise*

introduction

Our ministry extends far beyond the boundaries of our local parish. Through our church we are connected to people around the world who are working in Partnership for Life:

- partnership — for life that is rich beyond survival;
- partnership — for life that bears witness to the strength of those living with HIV and AIDS;
- partnership — for life that releases God's promise to all people to live life in its fullness, free from want and fear.

In our prayers and our offerings this morning we celebrate and give thanks for our church-based partnerships in development, relief, and justice.

opening prayer

One: Let us pray:
Blessed are you, God of life, for in Jesus, the servant of all, we see your human face. We give you thanks for the faith, hope and love that sustain us in our work for healing, justice and liberation. We give you thanks for the witness of those living with HIV and AIDS. May we recognize that as one part of the body is gifted

with life and healing, so is the whole. Then may we proclaim our hope in the coming of your reign when all will be one in a new humanity, and you will be all in all, God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

readings

Hebrew Scripture, Joel 2.21-27
"I will restore the years that the locusts have eaten."

Psalms 126 (may be sung or said)

When God Restored Our Common Life

When God restored our common life, our hope, our liberty,
At first it seemed a passing dream, a waking fantasy.
A shock of joy swept over us, for we had wept so long;
The seeds we watered once with tears sprang up into a song.

We went forth weeping, sowing seed in hard, unyielding soil.
With laughing hearts we carry home the fruit of all our toil.
We praise the one who gave the growth, with voices full and strong.
The seeds we watered once with tears sprang up into a song.

Great liberating God, we pray for all who are oppressed.
May those who long for what is right with justice now be blessed.
We pray for those who mourn this day; and all who suffer wrong;
may seeds they water now with tears spring up into a song.

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Tune: Resignation (583 *Common Praise*, 87 *Book of Praise*)

Alternate tunes: Carol, Forest Green, Kingsfold

Alternate Psalms: 69, 70, 71, 86, 103

Christian Scripture, Revelation 21.1-6
“I make everything new.”

Gospel, Luke 17.11-19
“Ten healed of leprosy”

children's story

Today we are learning, singing and praying for children around the world who are losing their parents to a very serious illness called AIDS.

sermon/reflection

prayer of intercession

prayer of confession

One: The enormity of the realities and complexity of the issues related to the suffering of people with HIV and AIDS confronts us with the realities and complexities of our human community. God is speaking to us in this moment, inviting us to open our eyes and to turn with hope towards the promise of new life. Let us confess together:

All: Gracious and life-giving God
We confess
Our complacency in the face of this global pandemic;
Our ignorance and fear that breed discrimination and stigma;
Our part in the blame and hatred that isolate people and destroy life;
Our inaction and avoidance that contribute to life-threatening silences.

Silence

One: Loving God, you embrace all creation with your liberating grace,

All: Stir us to make action and commitment a sign of our confession and of our trust in your gift of forgiveness. Amen.

invitation to share the peace

One: May Christ who calls us to love one another, inspire us to love and serve a broken world, and incline our hearts toward peace.

The peace of the Christ be always with you.

All: And also with you.

offertory hymn

We Cannot Own the Sunlight Sky

We cannot own the sunlight sky, the moon, the wildflowers growing, for we are part of all that is within life's river flowing. With open hands receive and share the gifts of God's creation, that all may have abundant life in every earthly nation.

When bodies shiver in the night and, weary, wait for morning, when children have no bread but tears, and war horns sound their warning, God calls humanity to wake, to join in common labour, that all may have abundant life in oneness with their neighbour.

God calls humanity to join as partners in creating a future free from want or fear, life's goodness celebrating. That new world beckons from afar, invites our shared endeavour, - that all may have abundant life and peace endure forever.

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Tune: My Life Flows On (716 *Voices United*, 401 *Common Praise*, 717 *Book of Praise*)
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prayer of dedication for the offering

**All: We stand before you, Lord,
with hands wide open,
ready to receive you.
We bring before you, Lord,
our modest gifts,
like tiny seeds,
not knowing what fruits you may bring out of them.
We wait before you, Lord,
asking that our hands and gifts,
offered in your service,
will make a difference to the world
beyond all our imaginings,
in the name of Jesus, who once was weak
and now is exalted. Amen.**

—Author unknown

closing hymn

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

Creating God, your fingers trace
the bold designs of farthest space;
let sun and moon and stars and light
and what lies hidden praise your might.

Sustaining God, your hands uphold
earth's mysteries known or yet untold;
let waters' fragile blend with air,
enabling life, proclaim your care.

Redeeming God, your arms embrace
all now despised for creed or race;
let peace, descending like a dove,
make known on earth your healing love.

(hymn is continued on next page...)

Indwelling God, your gospel claims
one family with a billion names;
let every life be touched by grace
until we praise you face to face.

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410 *Common Praise*, 625 *Voices United*

Tunes:

Duke Street – 103 *Book of Praise*

Melcombe – 815 *Book of Praise*

O Waly Waly – 25 *Book of Praise*

Old 100th – 306 *Book of Praise*

the dismissal

One: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, by loving and serving one another.

All: Thanks be to God.



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prayer of intercession

Let us pray:

God, the giver of life to the world,
we look forward to the day when death will be no more.

Waiting for that day with hope and courage,
we pray for justice in all the world.

Today we lift up...

Countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas suffering from this pandemic.

and/or mention by name countries that appear in this week's news.

God, the giver of life to the church,
we look forward to the day when tears will be shed no more.

Waiting for that day with commitment and service,
we pray for your blessing on our church and our community.

Today we lift up...

Those in our church community and our neighbourhood who
offer the hand of Christ to those suffering with AIDS.

*and/or mention activities of the church and the local community,
particularly local organizations involved in HIV/AIDS work.*

God, the giver of life to all people,
we look forward to the day when pain will be no more.

Waiting for that day with compassion and care,
we pray for peace for those whom we love.

Today we lift up, (silently or aloud)...

those among us in this congregation who need help and healing.

reflection

towards life without aids

Based on Luke 17.11-19 (Ten healed of leprosy); Revelation 21.1-6 (I make everything new) and 1 Corinthians 12.12-27 (You are the body of Christ)

ten lepers

Today, in the Gospel reading, we find Christ traveling between Samaria and Galilee, on his way to Jerusalem. On his journey he is approached by ten people.

These ten keep their distance. They don't run up to him. They don't reach out and touch his cloak, as others have done. They come calling: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

They are lepers.

In biblical times people with leprosy experienced alienation and rejection. There was no cure for this disease, only certain, and painful death.

In Jesus' time, people diagnosed with leprosy were considered "unclean." In fact they had to shout "unclean" so people knew to stay away. Some wore a bell around their neck to warn people when they were near.

In Jesus' time people were certainly afraid of catching leprosy, but leprosy had also become a matter of ritual impurity rather than a medical problem. People considered it divine punishment and feared that the community would also suffer if the leper were not sent away.

Jesus did not reject the lepers. Seeing them, hearing their cries, he had compassion on them. He tells them to go and show themselves to the priests. And as they go, a miracle happens—they are healed.

This isn't the only time in the bible when Jesus meets people with leprosy. In Mark 1: 40, when a man with leprosy comes to Jesus, Jesus defies the rules of the society, that the unclean cannot be touched by the clean. Instead, he reaches out his hand and touches him, and makes him "clean."

When it came to lepers, care and compassion direct Jesus' action.

Today, as we follow Christ, we are also called to reach out our hands to touch those who are suffering from another disease that alienates - HIV and AIDS.

the impact of hiv and aids

In order to minister to people living with HIV and AIDS we need to know about the disease. Here are some basic facts.

AIDS is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, HIV. When people become infected with HIV, we call them HIV positive (HIV+).

HIV attacks certain white blood cells called T-cells, eventually destroying the person's immune system. As a result, the individual can suffer from many diseases that a healthy immune system would reject. When people become sick from these "opportunistic" infections, we say the person has AIDS. It is the opportunistic infections that often kill people living with AIDS.

HIV is spread when certain body fluids are transferred from an infected person. HIV is not spread through casual contact, such as hugging or sneezing. It is spread through sexual contact, exchange of blood (especially by sharing needles for drugs, tattoos, or steroids), the birth process (an infected mother can transmit the virus to her infant in vitro or during birth) and breastfeeding.

An HIV+ person can infect other persons, even though the infected person shows no signs of the disease. This latency period—the time from HIV infection to the development of AIDS—can last more than 10 years. There is no cure for AIDS; no vaccine for HIV.

There are treatments that can extend life and offer new hope for people living with HIV. Treatment with antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), usually a combination of three ARVs, can extend the life of people living with HIV and AIDS, and give them more productive time with their families and loved ones. Many, too sick to work, have been able to return to relatively healthy lives and care for their families, with the help of ARVs. But many still do not have access to these drugs.

Statistics from *The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS* (2004) give us an idea of the magnitude of the problem.

There are approximately 34 to 46 million people in the world living with HIV.

Since the epidemic was first identified in 1981, more than 20 million people have died.

In 2003 alone 2.9 million people died of AIDS.

In 2003 there were 3 million children living with HIV and more than 14 million children had lost one or more parents to HIV/AIDS.

Over 95 percent of persons with HIV live in developing countries. Only seven percent of them have access to treatment that will help extend their life.

Women are more vulnerable to infection with HIV. Women between the ages of 15 and 24 now comprise the majority of new infections in Africa and are more than twice as likely to contract the virus as young men. The UNAIDS Fourth Global Report states that 57 percent of the adults with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are women. Many women do not have the power to negotiate to protect themselves, and are often, by poverty, put into situations that make them more vulnerable to infection with HIV.

The most vulnerable are people who are already experiencing poverty, oppression, alienation and marginalization.

Poverty makes one more vulnerable to HIV. HIV spreads most rapidly among those with low incomes, inferior housing, poor nutrition and a lack of clean water and sanitation.

People living with HIV/AIDS often become too weak to keep jobs, plant crops or go to school, making them sink even deeper into poverty.

Malnutrition and other diseases can make you more vulnerable to infection if you come into contact with HIV, and make you develop AIDS-related diseases faster if you contract the HIV virus.

Children of parents living with HIV and AIDS, or whose parents have died of AIDS are often forced to abandon school to support themselves, and often younger siblings. As children grow up without the benefit of learning from their parents or formal schooling, they are less able to contribute to their country's development.

Poverty can take away your choices and force you into professions that make you more vulnerable, like commercial sex work.

Poverty can force you away from your family for months, years at a time, as you migrate to urban centers or other countries to seek work.

Stigma and discrimination can make you unwilling to talk about the disease, or to be tested to find out if you are infected.

Working for a world without AIDS requires sharing complete and accurate information about how HIV is spread. It also means working together against poverty, stigma, and human rights violations that not only accompany AIDS, but also contribute to the spread of HIV.

Although such sobering statistics may lead us to think that there is little hope, there are things that can be done.

responding as the church

Churches have not always responded with unconditional love. Sometimes churches around the world have been part of the problem. Reluctant to discuss issues of sexuality, and at times providing misinformation about the spread of the disease, the church has sometimes stood in the way of people learning how to protect themselves against HIV. At times churches have contributed to marginalization and stigmatization of people infected with HIV.

There are also many examples of people in churches reaching out in love to people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS - accepting, caring, and responding where no one else would. As the AIDS pandemic has progressed, more and more churches have responded with compassion.

Our church partners in Africa, Asia and Central America are witnessing the profound impact of HIV/AIDS on women, men, children, and communities.

They have realized that they must act, and have wrestled with the physical, sociological, spiritual and theological implications of this disease. They are playing a major role as spiritual, emotional and physical caregivers for communities living with HIV and AIDS in many ways:

(Find specific stories about churches' HIV/AIDS work at national church websites: www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/, www.pwrdf.org, www.united-church.ca,)

- Educators and peers talk to communities about how HIV is, and isn't, spread, and call for an end to stigma and discrimination in the home, church and workplace.
- Volunteers provide quality home-based care for people who are sick and dying. They help families care for orphans, and support orphan families so they can stay together in their own homes.
- Small loans and skills training help people infected and affected by HIV support themselves with small businesses.
- Agriculture and nutrition programs help people stay healthy to live full, active lives.
- Advocacy programs fight to provide drugs and health care for all.
- Education programs are helping children and youth – girls as well as boys – go to school. Education is one of the important factors in helping people avoid infection with HIV.
- Partners, including women leaders, continue to work to empower women, build their leadership in church and society and address their oppression in the context of HIV/AIDS.

The HIV/AIDS crisis is growing, but its tragic course of suffering is *not* inevitable. As Christians called to work for justice, silence and inaction are not options.

We must join together as a church community to actively respond to the suffering and the injustice we witness.

Life without aids

There is much to lament; but we are a people of hope.

As we live through the AIDS pandemic, we know, because God is faithful even when we aren't, that death is not the final word. Now is the time to act.

Let us imagine together life without AIDS:

- life where everyone has access to excellent health care and quality education;
- life where orphaned children are loved, nurtured and cared for;
- life where people can live freely without fear of stigma and discrimination;
- life where people reach out in love to others, so that all people can live life to the fullest, with hope for today and tomorrow.

It is possible.

It means we need to act on poverty, unemployment and lack of education. It means we have to work for a world where women are given a voice in relationships and empowered to make decisions about how they live. We need to provide complete and accurate information about HIV and AIDS, and how to protect oneself from the disease. We need to provide hope for our youth.

As we pray for effective treatments, a cure, and a vaccine to end AIDS, let us work together to make good use of our spiritual gifts in ministering to those infected and those affected. Let us be a church that comforts the ill and mourns with those who mourn. Let us be a church that welcomes the stranger in, and makes them our sisters and brothers by saying, "Our Church has AIDS." Let us care for the children who have lost their parents and establish peer education programs to help protect youth from this avoidable infection. Let us speak against injustices that are contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

God's love extends across geographic boundaries, forgetting and neglecting no one. Now is the time for the church to give leadership in this unprecedented challenge for humankind.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul reminds us that we are all the body of Christ: "If one member suffers, all suffer together, if one member is honored, all rejoice together."

Let us suffer together, so that one day we may rejoice in life without AIDS.

caring for everyone

Consider again the ten lepers in Luke. You know the rest of the story. Our Sunday school teachers used it when we were young, to teach us to remember to thank God for our blessings.

One of the lepers, seeing that he is healed, turns back to praise God, to throw himself at Jesus' feet and thank him.

It wasn't who you thought it might be. It was the least likely....a Samaritan, an enemy.

We don't hear about the other nine. We don't know about the rest of their journey, or whether they ever gave thanks to God.

Jesus didn't ask questions. He didn't preach to them first. Jesus healed.

Do you think that he knew only one would return to praise him? Yet he healed them all.

Jesus also says to the leper: "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

He knows that faith was fully a part of the healing.

We minister to people with HIV and AIDS, those infected, those affected in the same way we minister to everyone. We see their needs and reach out with love and compassion - regardless of religion or politics or sexuality.

As we do, our actions give praise to God.

As we do, maybe one will see and experience the love of God, the compassion of Christ.

Maybe the least expected will meet God in that healing.

Maybe it will be us.