

Order of Service, World AIDS Day 2018

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Order of Service for World AIDS Day 2018

Before the service begins, place a red ribbon on a large cross. Then distribute red ribbons and an order of service to each congregation member as they enter the space for prayer.

Words of Welcome

Welcome to our World AIDS Day service. World AIDS Day is commemorated on 1st of December each year to remind us that HIV has not gone away. This is a time we remember the people we have lost, we give thanks for the progress we have made and commit ourselves anew to ensuring that no one is left behind. This year we want to pray *for increased efforts to reach the 9.4 million people living with HIV who are not aware that they are living with the virus and the estimated 19.4 million people living with HIV who do not have a suppressed viral load.*

Today, only 75% of the 37 million people living with HIV know their HIV status, and 21.7 million people living with HIV (59%) has access to antiretroviral therapy. These figures show the incredible progress made in the global HIV response. However, 9.4 million people living with HIV do not know they are living with the virus and urgently need to be linked to HIV testing and treatment services.

Call to Prayer

The service opens with the lighting of candles of hope and Music

Gracious loving Father,

Today we pray for all those who are still not aware of their HIV status. We pray that people living with HIV who are on treatment have access to viral load testing every 12 months: to remain healthy and to prevent transmission, the virus needs to be suppressed to undetectable or very low levels through sustained antiretroviral therapy and effectively monitoring of viral load.

We pray for those living with or affected by HIV and for their loved ones. We pray to receive strength and courage to fight injustice, inequalities and stigma and discrimination in our faith communities.

Forgive us, Lord, if we do not always stand up against a system that perpetuates injustice. Show us how we can serve all your children. If we are to see a day when there are zero AIDS-related deaths, zero new HIV infections and zero discrimination, guide us, oh Lord, to work together to ensure that the practical efforts, political will and financial commitments continue.

As we give thanks for what has been achieved, we commit ourselves anew to doing all we can to make sure no one is left behind.

Amen

Prayer

Lord have Mercy Upon Us;

Lord have Mercy Upon Us.

Christ have Mercy Upon Us;

Christ have Mercy Upon Us.

Lord have Mercy Upon Us;

Lord have Mercy Upon Us.

Lord, you have been our refuge in many ages past and our hope for many years to come. We come before you with all the praise for you Gracious Father, we commit to able and healing hands each and every member, family member, relative, friend and co-worker who are living and are battling with HIV and AIDS. We know that You have written their names on the palms of Your hands. We know your unfailing love to us all for you have created us in your own image. You know everything about them; You know when they sit down and when they stand up. We decree physical, emotional, spiritual and relational healing to each person who is living with HIV and AIDS.

By faith, we confess that they will trust in You and fix their thoughts on You so that they can live in Your perfect peace. We know that nothing is too hard for You hence we pray for the researchers and scientists who labour to making researches for proper and effective drugs and a vaccine. The suffering is too much especially the people of our land who mostly cannot afford good diet, good medication, good environment. Lord have mercy upon us and our cry should be heard by you merciful Lord. The Name of Jesus the healer is greater than the name of any disease or disorder including HIV and AIDS. We speak to their immune systems and command them to be made whole in the Name of Jesus. We cancel the assignment of every opportunistic infection and declare they are powerless to operate in

the bodies of God's own children. We command their lungs, hearts and organs to operate correctly. We command their red blood cells to carry the appropriate oxygen throughout their bodies and their white blood cells to form a protective shield against all foreign bodies.

We do not forget the widows and widowers who are in this state due to the loss of their beloved ones. Lord remember the children who are now being called orphans for having lost their relations to HIV and AIDS. Today they stand in need of food, shelters, clothing, school fees and all that makes their physical life complete. Yes Lord we know that you care for your children, and that your will meet their spiritual need, remember and please provide to them all that they need physically. Remind us all to share with them what you provide to us that in sharing we may demonstrate your unfailing love. Raise in us abundant love to one another and hope in all the situations we are in and not lose our faith in you God, the almighty. We make this prayer trusting in your Son Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God world without end. **Amen.**

The Right Reverend Brighton Vita Malasa – Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Upper Shire MALAWI

Music

Psalm 121 A song of ascents.

¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?

² My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

³ He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;

⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

⁵ The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

⁷ The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;

⁸ the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

Reflection

"I also could talk as you do, if you were in my place; I could join words together against you, and shake my head at you. I could encourage you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips would assuage your pain." (Job 16:4-5)

The Book of Job tells us of a righteous man whose life went totally off track. In short order his livestock were slaughtered by his enemies, his wealth and social standing vanished, and his children died when a building collapsed on top of them. Job's life became a nightmare of grief. In the midst of his suffering three steadfast friends came to sit with and comfort him. For seven days and nights they sat beside him in silence, simply offering witness to their dear friend's pain.

That's not a bad place to start—sitting with another in their pain—but unfortunately

Job's friends started to speak. And when they did, each of them in their own way beseeched Job to search his heart and identify the grievous sins that must have led to these horrors. Surely, they said, Job was paying a price for sin. After each spoke,

Job steadfastly maintained that he had done nothing worthy of these tragedies. And then he turned to his friends and said,

"I also could talk as you do, if you were in my place; I could join words together against you, and shake my head at you. I could encourage you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips would assuage your pain." (Job 16:4-5)

By the grace of God, HIV infection is no longer a death sentence and we have many powerful medicines that allow people to live with HIV for years without symptoms.

But in too many places, living with HIV still means social isolation and stigma and shame. And many people of faith still turn to those living with HIV and ask them what bad things they did to become HIV positive. They demand an accounting of sin before doling out grudging toleration. That's not compassion, but a self-righteous judgment, the exact opposite of compassion.

We pray that our communities can learn the lessons from the book of Job and that we will stand with sisters and brothers living with HIV, offering them hospitality both in our silent solidarity and when we speak.

With the "Leading by Example: Religious Leaders and HIV Campaign", religious leaders have gone a step further. By taking an HIV test themselves, they are breaking down the false divide between the "not infected" and "the sinners", throwing out these labels to remind us that regardless of our HIV status, we are all beloved children of God. They are acknowledging that HIV infects people from all walks of life, including pastors, preachers, and priests. As they take a test they are asking us to imagine what would happen if the tables were turned and to consider what it means to live with HIV. By doing this, religious

leaders bring Job's final words to his friends alive today: "I also could talk as you do, if you were in my place; I could join words together against you, and shake my head at you. I could encourage you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips would assuage your pain."

Let us all pray that regardless of our status we will love and support our neighbors living with HIV. Let us pray for God's help to refrain from offering words against those living with HIV or shaking our head at them in scorn. Let us pray for God's help to encourage one another with words and actions which offers solace that assuages our shared pain. Dear God, let it be so. Amen.

Reflection prepared by John Blevins, Presbyterian Church – USA

Leading by Example

"Because of prejudices that have caused many people to shy away from testing for their HIV status, I believe if many people under my sphere of influence know that I have tested voluntarily, they will be encouraged to test. I am particularly interested in encouraging other pastors and church leaders."

Rev. Ini Ukpuho - Director of ecumenism and interfaith relations, Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Moderator of the PCN Synod of the North

"A religious leader who knows their HIV status is an empowered leader, who earns the trust of the people who have not yet been tested. Knowing your status means you can challenge other people to be tested too, and also, when you are tested on time you have a better chance of living for a very long time with HIV. For the message of love and compassion that is prevalent in the religious community, it is important for us to understand the pain that people are going through, and to be wounded healers, who can bring healing to other people who are also struggling with their status."

Rev. Phumzile Mabizela - Executive Director, International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or personally affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+)

"HIV testing is a way to become aware of where you are. As testing is available, everybody should simply take it. Whether you are positive or negative, the test is a way to know where you are. And that's where everything begins. Once we are aware, that's when we can begin to act."

Rev. Dr T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki - President of the Buddhist Council of New York

"In my context, affected by war, in many places can people get HIV and AIDS without knowing. So raising awareness has been important, and very effective to this day. Once you know your status, you are able to speak with confidence. You are able to help people, especially as a leader, to understand their status. And if church leaders get tested, it is a sign of encouragement to the people, and means that testing is valuable. I believe religious leaders are listened to, more than

many others in society, and many people have a confidence in us, so when we lead, it brings value. And value is very important. Knowing your HIV status will help you if you are free from HIV from the virus, or if you are affected, you can get medication ahead of time, before it is too late."

The Rt Rev. Samuel Enosa Peni - Bishop of ECS Nzara Diocese, Episcopal Church of South Sudan & Sudan

"Religious leaders preach in a temple, in a mosque, and in a church; they are a role model for others, such as students. I recommend people to go for a test. As a religious leader you should talk about it more. As Hindus, we are silent about it, but you should come out of it. When you are preaching, you should talk also about testing. I recommend everyone to have a test done."

Kamla Fatania - Hindu Council of Kenya

"If the religious leaders, including the doctors and the nurses, are tested, they are going to have sympathy and a better understanding of how to care for those who are suffering from HIV, especially now living with HIV. If they have not tested, the picture is different. By getting tested, religious leaders' understanding is deeper, and of course it will reduce stigma, because these would be things that have been happening which they have been behind. It is important that they are tested, that they are part of the game, to see how we are all helping to make sure the suffering community is helped in terms of pastoral care and counseling. In leadership you have to be going where the people are going, leadership is knowing where we are going, knowing the ways to help us reach where we are going, and also in being members of the journey, journeying together, so that will be very comforting and spiritually sound."

Ven. Canon Masalakulangua - Anglican Church of Tanzania
Only half of those who are HIV positive are aware of their status - because they feel ashamed, do not feel trust, or have no possibility to get tested.

For this we pray You Our Lord. Amen

Music and Act of solidarity

To be the change is to be the leader. Ask participants to be agent of change against the stigma and discrimination that surround HIV and AIDS limiting access to testing, treatment, care and support for all those in need. Invite participants to commit to get tested themselves by signing an action sheet which gives information on HIV and HIV testing.

Reading

Matthew 22:33 -40

³³When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching. ³⁴Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷Jesus replied: "'Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Prayer

Let us together Pray the Prayer which in our mother languages:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and glory forever and ever. **Amen.**

Atate wathu wakumwamba, Dzina lanu liyeretsedwe, Ufumu wanu udze kufuna kwanu kuchitike, Monga kumwamba chomwecho panso pano. Mutipatse lero chakudya chathu chalero, Mutikhulukire zochimwa zathu, Monga ifenso tiwakhulukira otichimwira, Musatitengere kokatiyesa koma mutipulumutse ku zoipa. Chifukwa wanu ndi ufumu, ndi mphamvu, ndi ulemerero ku nthawi zosatha. **Amen. (Chichewa Version)**

Common Voice Pledge

Reader: *The AIDS epidemic is at a critical point. A remarkable, decades-long global effort has given us the capability to end AIDS as a public health threat. Strong advocacy by religious voices is vital to ensuring that the world perseveres and finally brings the AIDS epidemic to an end.*

Group: As leaders and followers of different religious traditions, we are speaking together with a common voice to urgently demand that the world re-commit to ending AIDS.

Leader: We are speaking with a common voice because our diverse religious traditions share many sacred values.

All: We share a conviction that all human beings must be treated with dignity and respect.

All: We share a responsibility to reach out to the marginalized and to protect the vulnerable.

Leader: Although HIV and AIDS affect different people, regions, and social groups differently, we know that the epidemic affects the entire human community.

Response: As members of the human community, we commit to playing our part in bringing the AIDS epidemic to an end.

Leader: We recognize that religious beliefs and practices have sometimes been used to justify judgmental attitudes and that the resulting stigma and discrimination have harmed people living with HIV and have weakened the global response to the AIDS epidemic.

Response: We reject these judgmental attitudes and we commit to fighting stigma and discrimination within our religious communities and within society at large.

Leader: We believe that all people should have access to HIV prevention and treatment services, including people who are marginalized by society.

Response: We strongly urge universal access to HIV services, provided with dignity and respect, and without stigma, discrimination, or fear of criminal prosecution.

Leader: We believe that our religious communities must be places of hope for people living with HIV.

Response: We commit to providing HIV services that address each unique individual's physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Leader: We believe that followers of our religious traditions have a personal responsibility to know their HIV status and to refrain from behavior that risks transmission of HIV.

Response: We commit to equipping members of our communities with knowledge about all HIV prevention methods so that they can take responsibility for avoiding HIV transmission.

All: Compelled by our common values, and with prayers for perseverance, wisdom, and divine guidance, we commit to building bridges with other religious traditions and we invite followers of all traditions to join us as we work together to end AIDS.

www.CommonVoiceAIDS.org

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

We are here yet again this year remembering our sisters, brothers, relatives, friends and everyone else who lives with HIV/AIDS. We are praying for your divine mercy upon them for the resources required for survival. May your grace be upon us all so that we can be mindful of the affected and the infected, particularly the children and adolescents who live with it or were orphaned along the way. Help us to continue reaching out to more people with the right information and let us have the zeal to know our status.

May you help our governments, pharmacies and health centers to be able to take the pandemic of HIV more seriously. May you bring peace to all those affected or infected and may you give them a long healthy life.

May you help us all to create awareness and accept those infected and may you give us solutions to be able to curb this condition.

May you guide us to be safe, do the right thing and always walk in righteousness. We are still hopeful that your mighty hand will locate the sick and bring them comfort for you are able. We pray this trusting and believing in your mighty name.

Amen!

Ann Mwaniki, young Kenyan woman. Ann was an Anglican youth delegate at the Commonwealth Youth Forum earlier this year and she is an excellent activist on a range of issues.

Sending out

Loving God,

Make of us a safe haven for those who are abandoned, discriminated against and rejected on account of their illness. Inspire us to speak out and act together for a just distribution of health care and for access to prevention, testing, treatment to all.

Music

Service prepared by the World Council of Churches – Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance