

ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL HIV EDUCATION CENTRE

RESOURCES FOR WORLD AIDS Month 2016

OR ADVENT SUNDAY

THEME: "HANDS UP FOR HIV PREVENTION"

World AIDS day is celebrated every year on 1 December. It is an opportunity for individuals and groups all over the world to come together to remember, and demonstrate worldwide support to people living with and people affected by HIV and AIDS. It is the one day in the year where issues surrounding HIV and AIDS can take centre stage.

The following resources have been compiled by the St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre to be used in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or the Eucharist Worship within parish groups or school assemblies. We hope that you will be able to use them as an aid to worship and an educational tool for your people.

RESOURCES FOR YOUR PEW BULLETIN

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR WORLD AIDS DAY 2016

Before the service begins, place an outline of a world map made from paper and tape at the front where people can see it. Light large white candles and put them in countries of the world with higher HIV prevalence and AIDS-related deaths.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Welcome to our World AIDS Day Service. World AIDS Day is held on December first each year. This is a time when we remember people who died from AIDS-related illnesses and people who are living with HIV; a time to give thanks for the progress that has been made and to reflect on what still needs to be done. It is an opportunity for people around the world to unite to eradicate AIDS and show support for people living with HIV. It is a time to commit anew to ensuring that no one is left behind.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Loving and compassionate God, we come before you this World AIDS Day to remember people impacted by HIV and AIDS and reflect on the progress which has been made and what more needs to be done. We are committed to the global goals of Zero New Infections, Zero AIDS-Related Deaths, and Zero Stigma and Discrimination. We are making every effort to end AIDS as a public health crisis by the year 2030. We thank you for the progress which

has been made to slow, reverse and prevent the spread of HIV, to mitigate its impact on families and communities, and to build welcoming and caring communities for all. This progress is the fruit of the divine gifts of reason, intelligence, good judgement, and spiritual inspiration that you have bestowed upon the millions of scientists, health care providers, mental health and social workers, pastoral caregivers, activists and members of civil society, and people directly impacted and affected by this disease, who are all doing their part to end this pandemic.

As believers who have been created in your own image and likeness, O God, we also are keenly aware that no matter how accurate is our knowledge, how proficient our skills, how passionate our commitment, we never will “get to zero until we empty ourselves more completely and more deeply trust in your almighty power. We know that only you, Father and Mother of us all, are capable of eliminating all illnesses, ending all poverty, eradicating all stigma and discrimination, and overcoming sin and death forever. Thus we entrust ourselves to your amazing grace, and we put ourselves at your caring and tender disposition to reach zero in the global response to HIV and other pandemic diseases and to fully cooperate with you in shaping and forming this world into a reign of justice, peace and charity. We make this prayer to you who rule all the forces of good forever and ever. AMEN.

(Composed by Monsignor Robert j. Vitillo, Special Advisor for Health and HIV, Caritas Internationalis).

Around the world, churches are living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. People who live and die with HIV and AIDS are our friends and family, our teachers and neighbours, our pastors and priests. Mission and Service partners are taking up their pastoral and prophetic role to overcome stigma and discrimination, to care for body and spirit, and to advocate for universal treatment and effective forms of prevention in their communities and in their regions.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is a regional partner that brings together 17 councils and 21 member churches. In June 2012, CCA held a “Because I Care” concert in Malang, Indonesia, during a seminar / writing workshop it conducted on “Asian theological Reflection on HIV & AIDS.”

The goal of the seminar was to increase the awareness and knowledge of participants regarding HIV and AIDS and to encourage spiritual and theological reflections on the sufferings of the affected people, their dependants and caregivers. Participants also reflected on the interconnectedness of HIV and AIDS with issues of gender inequality, sexual orientation, and reproductive health. People living with HIV and AIDS participated and brought their lived experiences to the discussions.

Many churches support the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) in its efforts to overcome stigma and discrimination, and in building the capacity of its member churches to effectively support those affected by the pandemic.

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) built further on this work by bringing its member churches together to deliberate, share initiatives, and give input into the HIV and AIDS policy of the NCCP. Mission and Service contributions have directly supported this work.

ANYONE CAN HAVE AIDS

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is an incurable but preventable disease. It is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which is transmitted through sexual relations with an infected person, transfusions of infected blood, use of contaminated needles and syringes, and from infected mother to child through pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. HIV damages the body's defensive system by disabling certain white blood cells that fight infection. All people are at risk from HIV and AIDS and all people can make a contribution to reducing that risk.

NOT EVERYONE WITH AIDS IS DYING

78 million people have become infected with HIV and 35 million people have died from AIDS-related illness.

It is not necessarily a death sentence for those who live in the industrialized world. By and large, they have access to life-prolonging antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, as well as clean water, proper nutrition and functioning health care systems. People in the Global South do not have such access.

PROVERBS 31: 8-9 NRSV

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

JOHN 9:1-11 NRSV

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread it on the man's eyes, saying to

him, “go, wash in the Pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were our eyes opened?” He answered “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash.” Then I went and washed, and received my sight.

THE RED RIBBON

The Red Ribbon is the international symbol of AIDS awareness, a symbol of respect for HIV positive people and people living with AIDS, and a reminder to us all of the constant need to keep up with the fight against AIDS.

The Red Ribbon is ...

- ♦ “red” like love, as a symbol of passion and tolerance towards those affected.
- ♦ “red” like blood, representing the pain caused by the many people that have died of AIDS.
- ♦ “red” like the anger about the helplessness with which we are facing a disease for which there is still no chance for a cure.
- ♦ “red” as a sign of warning not to carelessly ignore one of the biggest problems of our time.

Wearing the Red Ribbon is your first step in the fight against AIDS.

REFLECTION

Voice 1: HIV and AIDS cut across all boundaries. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, children. Members of communities and congregations.

Voice 2: 37 million people are living globally with HIV; 2 million people became newly infected this year; 1.2 million died from AIDS related diseases.

Voice 1: 22 million people living with HIV are still not accessing treatment. Among children the coverage is much lower; half of all people living with HIV are unaware of their status;

Voice 2: Adolescents, migrants, refugees, people uprooted by disasters, those working away from home, people with disabilities, sex workers, victims of violence and abuse, orphaned children, children on the move, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users,

transgender people, women and young girls, and aboriginal people are all particularly vulnerable.

Voice 1: Lord, let us pray for a world where all people have the equal opportunity to grow, develop, flourish, work and enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives, supported by laws, policies and programs that respect their human rights and address the social determinants of health and well-being.

Voice 2: Lord, let's us pray for a world where all people, living with or without HIV, are able to live their lives to the fullest, from birth to adulthood and into old age, free from discrimination and with dignity and equality.

REFLECTION: WHO SINNED?

The disciples thought it was a simple enough question: who sinned to bring about this blindness, the man blind from birth or his parents? They didn't seem to care how the blind man might have felt about the question – a question that probably already plagued him and his parents – how it might have stigmatized and discriminated against them both. They were looking for an easy answer, to explain a complicated situation.

Jesus, as he so often does, does something unexpected. He tells them that the blindness isn't about sin, neither of the blind man or his parents. He tells them that they are asking the wrong question, that instead of looking for someone to blame, they should be looking for the works of God. And then he shows them God by healing the man.

Like the disciples, the church has often stigmatized and marginalized and rejected people living with HIV. Can't you hear Jesus telling us to stop passing judgment on the people and instead to look for how God's works might be revealed? Can't you hear him challenging us, as the hands and feet of God in the world today, to do what we can to bring about healing instead?

When we defy stigma and discrimination and accept people for whom they are and love them unconditionally, without judgement; when we ask what we can do and how we can help, sincerely and honestly; when we fight for access to treatment for all and all people can live long and healthy lives, are not the works of God being revealed? It is then that people will see and experience God. Then we can say: "As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent us."

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Reader:

God our Creator, we confess that we have not looked upon all whom You have created with the same love and celebration as You have. We have not affirmed all Your people as having equal worth and equal dignity. We have stood by as others have been humiliated and cast out. Creator God, Have Mercy on us.

Reader:

Jesus our Redeemer, in Your life on earth you lived the inclusivity you preached. You reached to the margins of society and drew all to salvation through Your sacrifice on the cross. We confess that we have not lived your inclusivity. Day by day we encounter people whom You have redeemed and walk pass without recognizing the dignity you have bought for them; Redeemer God, Have Mercy on us.

Reader:

Holy Spirit our Sustainer, You breath life into all around us. Your breath fills us with life and draws us to want to praise You. We confess that our places of worship have not been welcoming spaces for all. We have worshiped with those we feel comfortable with and been apathetic about the countless people who have felt barriers to entry, barriers to full membership; Sustainer God, have Mercy on us. *(Composed by Rev.J.P. Mokgethi – Heath, Church of Sweden)*

SONG KYRIE ELEISON (LORD, HAVE MERCY)

Creator God you created the earth and everything in it.

You created everything interdependent and you created everything good.

You created women and men in your image, you blessed them both.

Help us to see your image on the faces of the victims of our violence.

Help us remember we have no right to subject anyone to violence.

Help all of us who live in violence to realize and to affirm our own dignity.

Help us to realise we were made in God's image.

Help us to remember that we should never tolerate violence.

Help your church to realize that Jesus did not tolerate violence against women.

Help us to fight violence in the HIV/AIDS era for it hampers both prevention and the provision of equality care.

In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

God of all the nations, so many of your children are crying out to you worn down by injustice and suffering.

Help us to fulfil our goal of helping to make real the vision that Christ spoke of as 'the kingdom of God' where justice reigns.

Help us to foster compassion one for another, tolerating damage to no one and oppression by no system.

As we remember those living with HIV at this time, may we use all our energy and imagination and trusting in your steadfast love be united in conquering disease and fear.

PRAYER FOR OUR WORK

Lord, we come before you with hearts of praise and thanksgiving.

We give thanks for the ministry of your Son, thanks for his life lived among those that society rejected, thanks for his mission to turn the existing order upside down.

But our praise is tempered with sorrow.

We are deeply sorry for our failure to respond to Christ's calling, sorry for our lack of imagination and compassion, sorry for the assumptions we make, sorry for our greed for which someone else pays the price.

We have sinned. And we ask for your forgiveness.

Lord, we believe in the grace of your healing, your power to mend all that is broken, and your desire for wholeness and renewal.

We pray that we may be healed and made whole, so we discard our excuses that make us feel exempt from responsibility, and treat all affected by HIV in the name of Jesus.
Amen

THE UNAIDS STRATEGY

In Asia and the Pacific region, 5 million people were living with HIV in 2014; 90% of them are from six countries: China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Globally, more than 36 million people were living with HIV in 2015; 2.1 million people became newly infected with HIV.

At its 37th meeting, the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board has adopted “The UNAIDS Strategy” (2016–2021) to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. . The Strategy is one of the first in the United Nations system to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, which set the framework for global development policy over the next 15 years, including ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

In the light of the need for change, this Strategy seeks to achieve a set of far-reaching and people-centred goals and targets that must be met by 2020. The goals correspond to each of the three strategic directions:

- Fewer than 500,000 people newly infected with HIV;
- Fewer than 500,000 people dying from AIDS-related causes;
- Elimination of HIV-related discrimination.

By 2030, the Strategy targets to achieve (1) “95-95-95” in HIV Treatment, (2) 200,000 new HIV infections or fewer, and (3) zero discrimination. To achieve the goals, it is important to provide youth-friendly information and services on HIV, sexual and reproductive health and harm reduction to young women and men, so that they can access to those information and services independently and equally, enabling them to engage in the response continuously.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) has been very active in the field of HIV and AIDS from the time the pandemic made its first appearance in Asia. The efforts of CCA down the years has been the consolidating and strengthening of HIV/AIDS awareness building campaigns in Asia, struggling against the judgmental attitudes that aid and abet discrimination and stigma of PLWHA, supporting the calls for accessibility and affordability of medicines and proper health care, advocating for PLWHA rights, and so on. The formation of an ASIAN INTER-FAITH NETWORK FOR AIDS (AINA) was formed out of the efforts of the CCA task force for HIV/AIDS a dream that former General Secretary Dr. Prawate Khid-Am held close to his heart.

Today the CCA and the AINA are recognized and acceptable voices in the Ecumenical movements that work for HIV and AIDS. It is generally appreciated for the work it has done to encourage, empower and involve Faith based organizations, churches and members across Asia to involve themselves in the healing ministry in

the service of the people living with HIV and AIDS, and in the best traditions that Jesus Christ has taught us to do. We are proud to acknowledge all those who have been closely involved with HIV and AIDS Ministry, the efforts that went into the preparation of the Policy guidelines on HIV and AIDS and all the resources published in this regard. May we move on to a better tomorrow and hope to be wake up in a world without HIV and AIDS.

To echo the Fast-Track to end AIDS as a public health treat, the St John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre will extend its AIDS and sex education to adolescents and schools in Hong Kong, Macau & Mainland China. One of our major focuses will be working with UNESCO to put together an international Youth Festival in 2017. Fast-Tracking the Global HIV response will require communities, countries and partners to work closely and undertake a series of transformative shifts at all levels.

The HIV Education Centre of St John's Cathedral (Anglican Cathedral, Hong Kong) was founded in 1995 in response to the AIDS epidemic. It was the first faith-based organisation to undertake an AIDS ministry in Hong Kong. Since its inception, the Centre has dedicated its efforts in providing HIV/AIDS and sexual health services including to conduct education programmes for different sectors of the community, such as women, youth and ethnic minorities to have interfaith cooperation and to conduct research projects and to offer practicum to undergraduate students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (an initiative of the World Council of Churches)
- CCA's HIV/AIDS Concerns blog: <http://cca-hivaids.blogspot.ca>
- Profile on United Church site: www.united-church.ca/partners/global/asia/regional
- National Council of Churches in the Philippines: Profile on United Church site: www.united-church.ca/partners/global/asia/philippines
- Mission and Service Fund
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- Prayers for HIV and AIDS – Christian Aid

- Monsignor Robert J. Vitillo, Special Advisor for Health and HIV, Caritas Internationalis
- Rev.J.P. Mokgethi – Heath, Church of Sweden

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Face book: <https://www.facebook.com/sjhivctr?ref=hl>

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