

AIDS Worship Materials



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

The following **AIDS worship resource and additional resources** (see back of this brochure for web sites)

can be used for

Presbyterian AIDS Awareness Sunday

(2nd Sunday in October),

World AIDS Day (December 1st),

or any time throughout the year.

HIV and AIDS continue to impact the lives of millions of people here in the United States and around the world. We are all touched by the AIDS pandemic. The church is called to speak a message of truth, hope, care and challenge; what better place than in the context of worship.

Suggestions for Preparing an AIDS Sermon and Service

- Reaffirm the dignity and humanity of those living with HIV and AIDS.
- Develop a HIV and AIDS liturgy that promotes awareness, education, and prevention, which also celebrates themes of life, reconciliation, justice, love and compassion.
- Remember that HIV and AIDS is a pandemic within other social diseases of: poverty, racism, violence, gender inequity, and the unequal distribution of resources and healthcare.
- Be sensitive to the fact that the millions of people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide are not only confronted daily with the detrimental physical effects of the disease, but also face overwhelming feelings of fear, despair, hopelessness, sadness and depression.
- Encourage imagination and conversation around how the church and its members can be used to support those infected and affected with HIV and AIDS.
- Consider having a display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. It is a creative means for remembrance and healing. The quilt is now housed at the NAMES Project Foundation, located in Atlanta, Georgia: www.aidsquilt.org
- Invite an AIDS worker, a person with HIV or AIDS, a family member, or a friend to be part of the planning and participation of the service.

- In preparation for a service lifting up HIV and AIDS, consider reviewing the actions of General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). Summaries of the Church's official stances, policies, and guidelines can be found in the Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/>.



A personal prayer in the midst of a church living with AIDS*

There are sisters and brothers in my community that are in desperate need of healing – healing from the ravages of HIV and AIDS. We don't even know who they are. Some of them are us. Walls of silence keep us apart. Many are fearful to speak the name of HIV and AIDS.

God, bring us all to a truly safe place filled with compassion and understanding. Bring us all to this place of safety; that the church may embody your spirit of protection and healing.

What part do I play?

Show me the way to make a difference.

Guide my hands to hold the first hand.

Open my heart to receive the first hug.

Remind me that you have chosen me. I can help.

God, awaken the spirit within me.

The Spirit that is mine is yours.

Your Spirit refreshes the soul with serenity.

Your Spirit embodies the heart with courage.

Your Spirit charts our right course with wisdom.

Help me break down the walls of separation within our community. Help me build bridges of love and understanding. Help me sweep away the debris of the isms, phobias, broken connections, and shattered hopes.

Prepare my heart to prepare your way. Encourage me to think the first thought, to make the first sound, to speak the first word. Help me break the silence.

* *We will Break the Silence, the Balm in Gilead, Copyright © 2005, The Balm In Gilead™*

Litany of Prayer and Confession

- One:* Last night over 8,000 people died of AIDS.
- All: Forgive us for our complacency.**
- One:* Last night 6,000 children were orphaned because of AIDS.
- All: Forgive us for our apathy.**
- One:* Every 8 seconds someone new is infected with AIDS.
- All: Forgive us for not having the time to raise awareness.**
- One:* Holy God, we know you hear the prayers and cries of your people.
- All: Our lips express great need and we turn to your listening presence.**
- One:* Loving and listening God, we pray for the strength needed to help ease the burden of illness and stand in solidarity with those living with HIV/AIDS.
- All: Help us to see that in sharing one another's grief, we grow in strength and compassion.**
- One:* We pray for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; may they be strengthened to call upon you and upon us for help and mercy.
- All: Hear their prayers, God, and grant us the hearts needed to respond to their calls. Help us to meet their needs with loving spirits and willing hands.**
- One:* We pray for the young who are infected with HIV/AIDS and those who are orphaned because of AIDS.
- All: Extend to the young your loving presence and comfort them when they feel scared and all alone.**
- One:* Gracious God, we thank you for the friends, families, religious organizations and medical communities who help care for and support those living with HIV/AIDS. Help these people remain steadfast in their commitment to helping those living with HIV/AIDS.
- All: Holy God, help fill them with the knowledge of your healing and redemptive love. Remind us all of the hope we find in you.**
- One:* We pray for all who are ill that they may have courage, strength and hope.
- All: Oh, God, inspire us to love and care for all of your children. Help us to serve those in need so that we may better serve you.**

Call to Commitment*

One: Church, we are the Body of Christ

All: We are the Body of Christ, living with AIDS.

One: If we choose, we can make a difference

All: If we choose, we can contribute to the healing of AIDS.

One: In our homes, in our church, in our community.

All: In our bodies, in our minds, in our spirits.

One: Our sisters and brothers, our parents and children are infected with HIV.

All: Our community is living and dying with AIDS.

One: If we choose, the blocks 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 that AIDS may be healed.

We pray and act for the healing of AIDS.



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Suggested Scripture Passages

Stepping into the pulpit to proclaim God’s healing mission to a world suffering with the global pandemic of HIV and AIDS may seem a bit daunting at first. Doing one’s homework about the pandemic, reflecting theologically, reading scripture through that lens, will help the pastor deliver the overwhelming message of God’s amazing grace and inclusive love for all . . . particularly those who have been marginalized by the church and society. The following scriptures are just a few suggestions to consider.

- Deuteronomy 10 God loves the orphan, the widow and the stranger
- Psalms 142 A prayer for deliverance
- Psalms 146 The Lord watches over strangers
- Isaiah 53 He was despised and rejected by others
- Matthew 8 The healing of the leper



Matthew 9
Matthew 11
Matthew 25
Mark 5
Luke 10
Luke 13
Luke 14
John 9
John 13

The paralyzed man and his friends
Come to me, all you that are weary
I was sick and you visited me
The woman who suffers from bleeding
The good Samaritan
The bent over woman
The parable of the great banquet
Rabbi, who sinned?
Love one another



For more worship resources
and to find out what PC(USA) is doing
regarding HIV and AIDS go to:

International AIDS Ministry

Joy Raatz

HIV/AIDS Initiative Facilitator

phone (888) 728-7228, ext. 5415

email joy.raatz@pcusa.org



www.pcusa.org/aids-international

and

Presbyterian AIDS Network



Presbyterian Health, Education
and Welfare Association (PHEWA)

phone (888) 728-7228, ext. 5800

email susan.stack@pcusa.org



www.pcusa.org/phewa/pan



100 Witherspoon Street • Louisville, KY 40202-1396

PDS# 25 38407 004