

*This prayer service was originally prepared and published by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. It is used with their permission. Minor adaptations were made by members of the IHM HIV/AIDS Committee.*

The statistics are taken from the UNAIDS report 'Together we will end AIDS' published in July 2012: <http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/>

UNAIDS is the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Its 'three zeros' vision is part of its 2012-2016 strategy: <http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/>

Additional copies of this prayer service can be downloaded at <http://ihmsisters.org/living-justly/peace-and-justice/current-issues/global-aids-crisis/online-resources/>



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# World AIDS Day

Remember. Hope. Act.



IHM Prayer Service  
For and with all who suffer  
with **HIV/AIDS**

Dec. 1, 2015



**WORLD AIDS DAY – DEC. 1, 2015**  
**IHM PRAYER SERVICE**  
*For and with all who suffer from*  
**HIV/AIDS**



World AIDS Day, observed on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> each year, is an important opportunity when governments, national AIDS programs, faith organizations, community organizations and individuals around the world bring attention to the global AIDS epidemic and emphasize the critical need for a committed, meaningful and sustained response.

The global theme for World AIDS Day 2015, selected by the World AIDS Campaign, is “Getting to Zero.” Backed by the United Nations, the “Getting to Zero” campaign focuses on the goals of zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS related- deaths.

**WELCOME**

**Leader:** Welcome to our World AIDS Day prayer service. This is a time when we remember the people we have lost, give thanks for the progress we have made and commit ourselves anew to ensuring that no one with HIV/AIDS is left behind.

There has been a great deal of progress in the response to HIV since AIDS was identified some three decades ago. Global infection rates have begun to decline, fewer babies are being born with HIV and eight million people in low- and middle-income countries are now on life-saving anti-retroviral medicines.

However, much more remains to be done. The number of people newly infected is still higher than the number of people starting on treatment. And there remain more than seven million people who need treatment but who do not have access to it, including two million children.

In addition, people living with or vulnerable to HIV continue to face stigma, discrimination and violations of their human rights and dignity, which thwart prevention and treatment efforts and deny them access to comprehensive care and support.

We are at a critical moment in the response to HIV. Progress has been made but it is not enough. Indeed, the only acceptable statistics here are “Zero



**Leader:** In Genesis 9, God said to Noah, “I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth ... I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature on the earth; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature on the earth.”

**All:** *We claim the promise of our God for all, in our hearts, minds and actions.*

**Leader:** Then go forth, confident in the trustworthiness of the One who placed the rainbow in the heavens - that we may see, remember and act.

**All:** *We claim the promise of our God for all, in our hearts, minds and actions.*

**Leader:** Go forth, strengthened by hope from the One who sent Jesus the Christ, knowing that this hope will not disappoint us.

**All:** *We claim the promise of our God for all, in our hearts, minds and actions.*

**Leader:** Go forth by faith. The One who placed the rainbow and sent the Christ has sent the Spirit, so we know that God is with us always.

**All:** *We claim the promise of our God for all, in our hearts, minds and actions.*

**Closing Song:** *City of God*  
or another appropriate song

- Dan Schutte

**Reader 3:** We humbly ask our merciful and loving God to hear our prayers:

God of Hope,  
All of us are affected by HIV and AIDS.  
At this time of Advent hope,  
As we prepare for the coming of your Son into this world  
We give thanks for signs of hope.  
For growing understanding,  
For medical advances,  
For changing attitudes and behavior,  
For greater awareness and concern in your church.

*All: O God, in your goodness, hear our prayer.*

God of Unity,  
Bind us together with strong ties of love.  
May our churches welcome all affected by HIV and AIDS.  
May they be places where care is given and received,  
Especially for affected children and youth,  
Where stories are told and heard,  
Where fear is overcome by love,  
Where you are to be found.

*All: O God, in your goodness, hear our prayer.*

God of Promise,  
The end of AIDS is in sight!  
Give us courage to run the race set before us.  
We look to you in prayer and in action,  
For a day when all will have access to education and information,  
For a day when all who need it can get affordable, good quality treatment,  
For a day when all are accepted, included and given care and support.  
Help us to us shed our cynicism, denial and sense of powerlessness.

*All: O God, in your goodness, hear our prayer.*

For all the intentions and hopes we hold in the silence of our hearts.

*All: O God, in your goodness, hear our prayer.*

AIDS-related deaths, Zero new HIV infections and Zero discrimination.” Today, World AIDS Day, we not only come together to give thanks for what has been achieved but to commit ourselves anew to doing all we can to make the UNAIDS vision of the “three zeros” a reality.

*With this in mind, let us begin our prayer service ...*

**Opening Song:** *Bring Forth the Kingdom of God* - Marty Haugen  
or another appropriate song

**Leader:** We gather before our God of promises with faith, commitment and hope. Hear the promise of the One seated on the throne:

**All:** “See, I am making all things new.”

**Leader:** Hear the promise of the Resurrected One:

**All:** “I will be with you always, to the end of time.”

**Leader:** We come to pray to our faithful God, who keeps these promises in love.

**Reader 1:** A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

Hear the word of our God, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, “The One who scattered Israel will gather them,  
and will keep them as a shepherd a flock.”  
For our God has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of God,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.  
I will turn their mourning into joy,  
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says our God.

(Jeremiah 31:10-14)

**Brief period of silent reflection**

**Leader:** Let us pray ...

**All:** *What will it take, O God ...*

**Left:** for us to see a day of no more AIDS-related deaths, no more new HIV infections and no more discrimination in our world?

**All:** *What will it take, O God ...*

**Right:** for change to come in our communities, our countries and our own lives?

**All:** *What will it take, O God ...*

**Left:** for the scattered to be gathered that all may live and praise and dance together?

**All:** *What will it take, O God ...*

**Right:** for us to see the end of AIDS?

**All:** *What will it take, O God ...*

**Left:** for us, your church, to finally be free from fear and intolerance?

**All:** *What will it take, O God ...*

**Right:** for us to recognize your Word made flesh and living among us with HIV?

**All:** *What will it take, O God, for the deaths to end and the dance to begin?*

**Brief period of silent reflection**

**Reader 2:** A reading from the book of Revelation.

Then I saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea existed no longer. I also saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride and a groom on their wedding day.

And I heard a loud voice calling from the throne,

“Look! God’s Tabernacle is among humankind!

God will live with them;

they will be God’s people,

and God will be fully present among them.

The Most High will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

And death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more,

for the old order has fallen.”

The One who sat on the throne said, “Look! I’m making everything new!” And added, “Write this, for what I am saying is trustworthy and true.”

And that One continued, “It is finished. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To those who are thirsty I will give drink freely from the spring of the water of life. This is the rightful inheritance of the overcomers. I will be their God and they will be my daughters and sons.”

(Revelation 21:1-7)

**In silence, consider the following questions.**

- What comes to mind as you contemplate the new heavens and new earth?
- What promise does God have for you and your neighbor?
- What is God’s promise for the world?
- What is God’s promise in relation to HIV and AIDS?
- What is being made new?
- What peace do you notice within you?
- As you breathe, allow your breath to reach this place of peace.
- Breathe out the old, breathe in the new.
- Give thanks to God for this time of reflection.

**Take a few moments to share your reflection with another person seated near you.**