

A Service of Wholeness for World AIDS Day

Since World AIDS Day occurs during the first week of Advent in the Christian year, it is appropriate (particularly in the sermon or prayers of the people) to make connections to the biblical and theological themes of the liturgical season. Advent is a time of waiting in hope and faith for the coming of Christ's realm—a new creation in which God's promises of justice, wholeness, and reconciliation are fulfilled. In this season of longing and anticipation, we give thanks for the light of life in Christ, which can never be extinguished (John 1:5).

————Gathering————

OPENING SENTENCES

Bless the Holy One, my soul.

Psalm 103

Let all that is within me bless God's name.

Bless the Holy One, my soul.

**Remember all that God has done—
forgiving our sins,
healing our diseases,
delivering us from despair,
crowning us with steadfast love and mercy.**

God will satisfy us with goodness all our lives.

God will raise us up and renew our strength.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, our constant help and strength,
we come to you in prayer for our church, our community, and our world,
for all of our lives have been affected by HIV and AIDS.
Reach out to us with your healing, saving touch;
draw us together in wholeness and true community;
extend your loving embrace to the excluded and fearful,
so that all may know your life-giving power and love;
through Jesus Christ, the healer of the world. **Amen.**

HYMN

O Christ, the Healer
Healer of Our Every Ill

PH 380
STF 2213

CALL TO CONFESSION

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
God has already set us free from the power of sin and death.
By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are beloved children of God.
Therefore, with confidence in God's abundant mercy,
let us confess our sins against God and one another.

Romans 8

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of grace, you know our sinful ways—
we have tried to deny the reality of AIDS;
we have neglected sisters and brothers in need;
we have been silent when you called us to speak out;
we have stepped back in fear, instead of reaching out in love.**

**Have mercy on us, living God.
Restore us to right relationships with you
and with one another;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.**

Silent prayer.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news of the gospel:
There is nothing in life or in death
that can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and free.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSE

Gloria, Gloria
Glory to God

PH 576
STF 2033

—————*The Word*—————

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of wisdom, by the power of your Spirit,
speak to us with your life-giving Word,
so that we may be made holy and whole. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

The minister may use lectionary readings for the day or select other appropriate passages of scripture. There is a list of suggested scripture lessons for services of wholeness and healing provided in the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship, pages 971-973.

SERMON

The proclamation of the Word should offer hope and encouragement to those living with HIV and AIDS, and should challenge the church to engage in ministries of compassion, outreach, and advocacy. There is good news to share: Jesus is still at work in our world, healing the sick, welcoming the stranger, binding up the broken, raising the dead. Christ calls us to participate in this redeeming, reconciling ministry, offering ourselves in love and service to others as Christ gave his own life for the world that God so loves.

HYMN

O Savior, in This Quiet Place

PH 390

— *Response* —

OFFERING OUR LIVES TO GOD

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters,
by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.

Romans 12

During this time of silent reflection, worshipers may consider what God is doing in their lives, and how they might offer themselves to the service of Jesus Christ in the world.

PRAYER FOR HEALING

Holy God, you have made us one body,
the body of Christ our Savior,
for we were all baptized in the one Spirit.
When one member suffers, we all suffer together;
when one member is honored, we all rejoice.

1 Corinthians 12

Hear now our prayers for the church, the community, and the world:

For all who are sick and suffering,
that they may know your comfort and care ...
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For families, friends, partners, and children,
that they may show your amazing love ...
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For doctors, nurses, and caregivers,
that they may extend your healing touch ...
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those engaged in research and study,
that they may receive your wisdom ...
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For equal access to life-saving medication,
that your justice may flow down like water ...
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For an end to stigma and discrimination,
that all your children may be reconciled ...
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For healing and fullness of life for all,
that we may glimpse your new creation ...
God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Petitions for specific needs may be offered by the minister or people.

Holy God, you have given us many good gifts
and have called us to love and serve one another,
even as Christ Jesus has loved us.

Use the gifts that you have given us for the common good—
renewing hope, restoring life, and reconciling all that is broken—
as you fulfill your eternal purpose for all the world;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

—————*Anointing*—————

INVITATION

Are any among you suffering? They should pray.
Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise.
Are any among you sick?
They should call for the elders of the church
and have them pray over them,
anointing them with oil in the name of God.

James 5

All present are invited to receive the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, an ancient sign of healing and blessing in the church. It is important that the invitation is open to all, so that none feel singled out or excluded.

THANKSGIVING AND INVOCATION

Gathering the minister(s) and/or elder(s) who will assist in the laying on of hands, and taking the oil that will be used for anointing, the minister prays:

Gracious God, source of all healing,
in Jesus Christ you heal the sick and mend the broken.
We bless you for this oil,
given to us as a sign of healing and grace,
and of the fullness of life that you alone can provide.
Pour out your Holy Spirit
upon all who receive this ministry of compassion,
that they may know your healing touch and be made whole;
to the glory of Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

LAYING ON OF HANDS AND ANOINTING WITH OIL

Those desiring the laying on of hands and/or anointing with oil may present themselves to the minister(s) or elder(s). Worshipers may (or may not) ask for specific prayers from the minister(s) or elder(s).

During the laying on of hands and anointing, the congregation may sing hymns or other appropriate songs.

At the laying on of hands:

N., may Christ Jesus grant you healing and peace.

At the anointing with oil:

N., child of God, as you are anointed with this oil,
may God grant you the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

**God, you are my shepherd—
there is nothing I lack.**

Psalm 23

**You make me lie down in green pastures;
you lead me beside still waters;
you restore my soul.**

**You lead me in right paths
for your name's sake.**

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.**

**You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.**

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in your house
my whole life long. Amen.**

—————*Sending*—————

HYMN

There Is a Balm in Gilead
You Are Mine

PH 394
STF 2218

BLESSING

May God bless you and keep you.
May God be kind and gracious to you.
May God look upon you with favor
and give you peace. **Amen.**

Numbers 6

A sign of peace may be exchanged by all.

Adapted from “A Service for Wholeness for Use with a Congregation,” from the Presbyterian
Book of Common Worship (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993) 1001-1015.