

World AIDS Day Observance

Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, IL Vespers: First Sunday of Advent Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS: Light in the Darkness

The beginning of the prelude is a call to silent, personal preparation for the worship of God.

Sanctuary Lights Dimmed... the four pillar candles on the chancel steps remain lit

Prelude *Savior of the Nations, Come* Paul Manz

Welcome We welcome you to this World's AIDS Day Observance. The global AIDS epidemic, through its devastating scale and impact, constitutes a global emergency and one of the most formidable challenges to human life and dignity. Nearly every town, village, and neighborhood in Africa is affected by AIDS. There are over 8,000 HIV/AIDS related deaths per day in Africa and this has created over 13 million orphans. In the United States, more than 460,000 people have died of AIDS since 1981. The theme for World AIDS Day 2004 is Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS: Light in the Darkness. The letters we hear read this evening are letters written by women who have HIV/AIDS living in South Africa. As we follow Jesus in our time, may we see the darkness brought by the HIV/AIDS epidemic being a lit up by the light of Christ.

Poem Look what it has done to me
First it was my papa, then my mama followed
Both gone for a journey
A journey never to return

Here I stand alone in the world
With nothing to call a family
With nowhere to call home
An orphan I have become
Yet I am so young

Now my future is so uncertain
But I weep for you
I weep for us
Weep for us
Who are busy killing the future
Creating a generation of AIDS orphans

Call to Worship

Leader: Someone is coming...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: Someone is coming to grant dignity to long-suffering bodies...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: Someone is coming to the breathless...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: Someone is coming to those who lack energy...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: Someone is coming to those who grow thinner day by day...
People: **We are waiting...**

Leader: Someone is coming to those who don't know if their hands will work tomorrow...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: Someone is coming to those who have neither mother nor father...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: Someone is coming to those who cannot get medicine...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: Someone is coming who cares who put their care into action...
People: **We are waiting...**
Leader: But we wait in darkness; Christ be our Light!

Sanctuary Lights go on to normal while the Advent Candle is lit

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Leader: We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
Advent means coming. We are preparing ourselves for the days.

All: **Christ be out light, shine through the darkness.**

Invocation O Holy One, you invited all to follow you. You touched lepers. Your feet were washed with women's hair. Draw us into your community...
where dignity is not earned, but freely given,
where pain is not shunned but surrounded by healing love,
where we are bound in tears and gladness,
where everyone has a place
because of you Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

***Hymn 9** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" *Tune: VENI EMMAUEL*

Reading of A Letter My Name is Martha

My name is Martha. After I found out that I'm HIV positive, I think [about] dying from [this] ruthless disease. I struggle to contain my emotions and fight back the tears. It's because I have [seen so many] people killed by AIDS-related illness. It was the saddest moment of my life. When I see my children—that they are going to lose their mother—like that really broke my heart and I lost hope.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Let us come before God and welcome the stranger:

All: **Let us welcome those we do not want to welcome, those we would rather pass by.**

Leader: Let us reconcile ourselves to God and then to each other:

All: **We ask you God to forgive us and help us to forgive others, so that we can accept them with open arms. May our hearts be transformed by and with love, that we may help those living with HIV and AIDS in whatever way we can. May we change our actions from hostility to hospitality, and welcome you Lord in everyone we meet.**

Silence is kept. (Count to 45)

Amen.

Declaration of Pardon

Leader: Friends, believe the good news.

All: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

The Peace

Leader: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Now exchange with one another, signs of peace and reconciliation.

Sacrament of Baptism

Unison Prayer

Holy God, remind us of the promises given in our own baptism and renew our trust in you. Make us strong to obey your will and to serve you with joy; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Concerns of the Church

Psalter Psalm 13

Leader: How long, O God? Will you forget me forever?

People: **How long will you hide your face from me?**

**How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?**

How long shall my enemy have the upper hand over me?

Leader: Consider and answer me, O God:

People: **give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death—**

**lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed,”
and my foes rejoice because I am shaken.**

Leader: But I have trusted in your steadfast love;

People: **my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.**

I will sing to you, O God

because you have dealt bountifully with me.

All: **Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your face, and we shall be saved.**

Anthem “*Who at My Door is Standing?*”

English folk song
arr. K. Lee Scott

Reading of a Letter I wish to be like other people.

I wish to be like other people who are HIV positive, to teach people with this disease. But I always ask myself, if I stand in front of the crowd, teach them, when they ask me how did I get this disease, what am I going to tell them? How and when did I get it?

We must know that [we] belong to God. We must not let evil get the upper hand, but conquer evil by doing the good. Don't be weary in prayer, keep at it, watch for God's answers and remember to be thankful then they come.

Scripture Lesson Lamentations 3:19-24

(page 766, O.T.)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

All: **Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your face, and we shall be saved.**

Scripture Lesson Matthew 8:1-4

(page 7, N.T.)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Communion Meditation:

Keith C. Harris

THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying "I do choose. Be made clean! Immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Matt 8:3 NRSV)

***Hymn 391** "Take My Life"

Tune: HENDON

***Affirmation of Faith**

Leader: In the darkness you bring us light.
In the morning you bring us hope.

People: **In the evening you bring us rest.**

Leader: In our fears you bring us peace,
In our doubts you bring us faith.

People: **In our pain you bring us your cross.**

Leader: In our arms you bring us love.
In our weakness you bring us strength.

People: **In our bitterness you bring us tenderness.**

Leader: In our anger you bring us mercy.
In our grief you bring us comfort.

All: **In our death you bring us your resurrection.**

In our comings and goings your are always here. Amen.

(Mothers Unison Prayer)

Offering Accept, O Lord, the offerings we bring, of ourselves and our money; and grant that we may always work and pray to build a world that shines with peace, joy, and freedom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Your evening offerings will now be received.

Offertory Anthem *Creator of the Stars of Night*

Plainsong
arr. Dale Wood

***Doxology**

(The Hymnal, 592)

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Reading of a Letter My Name is Naomi

My name if Naomi. Sometimes I sit with my children, and tell them how difficult life is outside. When I'm alone I try to figure out—how did I get this disease, from whom? Because I was married at an early age; I stayed with my husband for 21 years until he passed away [in] 2000. If he was alive, I [would talk with him], ask him the truth. Maybe the answer[s] are with him.

Invitation

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Minister: Creator God, we give you thanks and praise.
You are present with us through all the stories of our life as your covenant people.
When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt into the wilderness, you led them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. And when they were hungry, you covered the earth with manna.
When Elijah fled to a cave on Mt. Horeb, fearing for his life and wanting to die, you left a cake on a hot stone and reminded him to “Arise and eat, lest the journey be too great for you.”
Queen Esther prepared a banquet so as to influence the King to save the Jews from their certain destruction. The Psalmists remind us that “you set a table before us, even in the presence of our enemies” and when our hearts are “stricken and withered like grass and we are too weak to eat bread”, even then you are there.
And so we join with all the ages who forever sing to the glory of your name...

People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Minister: Gracious God, we give you thanks for sending your Son, Jesus, to live among us and to teach us about sharing bread. A child gave Jesus his lunch of bread and fish and it fed a hungry crowd. A woman from Samaria gave Jesus a drink of water and he told her about “living water.” Jesus saw Zaccheus in a tree and said, “Come down, Zaccheus, I’m coming to your house today. And at a table, he learned about sharing bread and sharing wealth.
During Passover, Jesus prepared a meal for his disciples. After giving thanks, he took bread and broke it and gave it to them and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. Do this remembering me. In the same way he took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood for the forgiveness of sins. Drink all of it. And when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples, he took bread and gave it to them and their eyes were opened and they recognized him Great is the mystery of faith: Christ has died, Christ has risen. Christ will come again.
Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine. That the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours Almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

(unison)

Our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

The Communion

(After receiving the elements, you are invited to take a Red Ribbon to wear to remember those who live with and have died from AIDS and carrying the symbol of light of Christ in the darkness out into the world; attached is the first name of a person in Chicago who is living with HIV/AIDS. You are invited to keep that person in your prayers.)

Communion Servers Looking with intention directly into the eyes of the one communing say...
Bread: The body of Christ broken for you.
Wine: The blood of Christ shed for you.

Prayer After Communion

Leader: In the midst of the long night, is there anyone who cares?
People: **We say the church cares.**
Leader: When all the relatives have died, is there anyone who cares?
People: **We say the church cares.**
Leader: When the fingers point and the tongues wag, is there anyone who cares?
People: **We say the church cares.**
Leader: In the struggle to find meaning and peace on the boundary of life and death, is there anyone who cares?
People: **We say the church cares.**
All: **In the name of Jesus Christ, the church must care.
In the name of Jesus Christ, the church does care.
In the name of Jesus Christ, the church will care. Amen.**

***Hymn 525** "Here I Am, Lord"

Tune: HERE I AM, LORD

During the last stanza, the lectors go to one of the pillar candles, holding them in front of you, stand in a row behind the Communion Table. Each steps forward and then extinguishing the candle accordingly. The sanctuary lights are dimmed after each candle is extinguished. As the candles are re-lit, the sanctuary lights are turned back on. Following the response of all, the candle lighter child will lead the recession out of the sanctuary.

Benediction

Narrator: Four candles slow burned. Their flames softly glowed as they gave their light to the room.
Reader #1: The first candle said, "I am peace!"
The world is full of anger and fighting. Nobody can keep me lit.
Narrator: Then the flame of peace went out completely.
Reader #2: The second candle said, "I am Faith!"
It seems I am no longer always needed. People try to get along without me. It doesn't make sense that I stay lit another moment.
Narrator: Just then, a breeze softly blew out Faith's flame.
Reader #3: The third candle began to speak sadly, "I am Love!" as it noticed the other two candles no longer lit. People don't really understand my importance so they put me aside. The even forget to love those nearest to them. I haven't the strength to stay lit.

Narrator: And waiting no longer, Love's flame went out.

Suddenly... a child entered the room and saw the three unlit candles.

Reader #4: Why aren't you burning? You are supposed to stay lit until the end!"

Narrator: Saying this, the child began to cry.

Reader #5: Then the fourth candle answered, "Don't be afraid, I am Hope!"
While I am still burning, we can re-light the other candles."

Narrator: With shining eyes, the child took the candle of hope and lit the other candles.

All: The flame of Hope should never go out from your life; and with hope, each of us can live a life with Peace, Faith, and Love!

Postlude *Savior of the Nations, Come*

Dieterich Buxtehude

*Stand as you are comfortable

Sunday, November 28, 2004