



Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise.

Worship Service for World AIDS Day 2008

Introduction

*Every 15 seconds someone in the world dies of AIDS-related illnesses, most often because of a lack of medicine. The hope that we now have in medicines that can offer a nearly normal life to people living with HIV makes only more tragic the fact that many continue to die. We have the scientific means to stop much of the dying from AIDS-related illnesses, but we lack the will to do it. This is a spiritual problem—not of those who contracted the disease, but of churches and societies. It is a problem that can be solved by **leadership**. Leadership from you and me, from our churches and our politicians.*

Preparing the Service

At the start of the worship, candles are lit around the room or in various places in the church. One needs one candle for every 15 seconds of the expected worship time. We mark these deaths from AIDS-related illnesses with a sound: e.g. ringing a bell, beating a drum or any other repeatable sound used to mark someone's death, and by blowing out a candle. When the bell rings we stop whatever we are doing and wait for a second for the flame to be extinguished. Then we continue.

The bell ringer (or person making the appropriate sound) and the person blowing out the candles move around the room during the service, if this is practical. The sound lets the congregation know where the light is being blown out. Reduced lighting is useful for making the reduction of the light from the candles visible. The worship is designed to take place without the need of a printed worship sheet. But the readers and the song leaders must have good diction, particularly in the parts where the congregation is invited to repeat what is said or sung.

When people arrive the bell (or other sound) can be already ringing every 15 seconds. When the service is over it can also continue. Just because the worship has ended does not mean that people have stopped dying.

The music should be chosen so that a leader can sing a phrase and the people repeat within the 15 seconds.

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This worship service is adapted from one used at the 2008 Ecumenical Pre-Conference at the International AIDS Conference: Faith in Action Now!, on 31 July, 2008 in Mexico City. There we were using two languages, Spanish and English. The words were often too long to fit within the 15-second times. The English has been shortened to insure that they are finished before the next bell rings. It is important to stop whatever is going on when the bell rings, to honour that moment, and not just to continue reading or singing. We did this differently in Mexico City, but the idea lost some of its power because we did not stop and wait for the candle to be out, with its appropriate attention. If the preacher is able, he or she should also find phrases, which fit in the 15-second time frame and leave the silences waiting for the bell or drum.

This worship service is intentionally sombre and slow. It takes a basic fact about the AIDS pandemic and marks it. It may be wise to have some people, who are not in leadership roles in the worship, be prepared to offer pastoral care if this is needed.

There are many parts to be read. These can be read by the pastor, a deacon, a lay leader, a young person – whatever best fits in your tradition.

This service can be downloaded from <http://www.e-alliance.ch/wad/worldaidsday/> to make it easier for you to adapt it for your own context. It is also available through this link in English, French and Spanish, along with other resources for World AIDS Day.

Notes on the songs

The music contained or referenced in the service is only based on suggestions, which you are free to change.

Nkosi, Nkosi is from South Africa. It can be found in several hymnals, including Evangelical Lutheran Worship #153, published by Augsburg Fortress. Thuma Mina #37, published by Strube Verlag GmbH, München, Germany. It was originally published by Anders Nyberg in Freedom is Coming, published by Utryck, Sweden. It can be downloaded from various sheet music providers on the internet.

By the Babylonian Rivers is also available for download on the Internet. The source is Cantate Domino #14 published by Bärenreiter for the World Council of Churches.

Jesus, Saviour, Lord, lo to thee I fly is found in Sound the Bamboo #59, Christian Conference of Asia, in the USA published by GIA. It is also found in The United Methodist Hymnal #523, The United Methodist Publishing House.

The **Kyrie** from Ghana is found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship #151 or in More Voices #70 published by United Church Publishing House, United Church of Canada.

Credits

This liturgy was written by the Rev. Terry MacArthur.

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Greeting

- bell* **Leader:** “Nobody dies of AIDS anymore”.
This is the dangerous perception in rich parts of the world.
- bell* **Leader:** Some claim that AIDS is just another chronic illness that one lives with. But
there is another reality.
- bell* **Leader:** According to UNAIDS, every 15 seconds someone in the world dies of an
AIDS-related illness.
- bell* **Leader:** We may not know their names, or their histories. We may not know their joys,
or their dreams.
- bell* **Leader:** But they die. They keep on dying.
They keep on dying.
Dying.
- bell* **Leader:** When no one weeps for them, God weeps.
God weeps.
- bell* **Leader:** Every 15 seconds God weeps for someone dying of illnesses related to AIDS.
- bell* **Leader:** We pray that God remembers those we don’t know how to remember.
- bell* **Leader:** We mark the time, and each death – happening at this moment.
- bell* **Leader:** We worship the Blessed Trinity, one God, now and forever. Amen.
- bell*

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Sung Kyrie Eleison (Lord have mercy)

We used *Nkosi, Nkosi* from South Africa, one phrase at a time, with the bell rung every 15 seconds.

Psalm 10

bell **Reader:** Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

bell **Reader:** In arrogance the wicked persecute the poor--let them be caught in the schemes they have devised.

bell **Reader:** For the wicked boast of the desires of their heart. Those greedy for gain curse and renounce the Lord.

bell **Reader:** Their eyes stealthily watch for the helpless: they seize the poor and drag them off in their net.

bell **Reader:** They think in their heart, "God has forgotten, God has hidden God's face. God will never see it."

bell

Song of Lament

Betty Hernández and Maritza Dixon: Mexico/Panama

dm dm

O - ye, Se - ñor, tu pue - blo te cla - ma. O - ye, Se - ñor, tu
Hear us, O Lord, your peo - ple cry to you. Hear us, O Lord, your
En - tends, Sei - gneur, ton peu - ple qui t'ap - pelle, en - tends, Sei - gneur, ton

C A7 dm A7

pue - blo te cla - ma. Dá - nos tu for - ta - le - - - za ya - vi - va la
peo - ple cry to you. Give us your stead - fast cour - age to live out our
peu - ple qui t'ap - pelle, don - ne - nous cou - ra - - ge pour for - ti - fier

dm A7 dm A7 dm

nues - tra fé. O - ye, Se - ñor! O - ye, Se - ñor!
faith with strength. Hear us, O Lord. Hear us, O Lord.
no - tre foi. En - tends, Sei - gneur, en - tends, Sei - gneur.

Music and Spanish © Betty Hernández Carillo, Calle 2 de Hochtun 21, Viveros del Valle, Tlalnepantla, Estado de Mexico, .P. 54060, Mexico. English, Ulisses Mantovani and Terry MacArthur © WCC, Geneva, Switzerland. Français, Christian de Ferry © 1998 WCC 150, Route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

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We used **Oye Señor** by Betty Hernandez Carillo from Mexico and Maritza Dixon from Panama. We did it phrase by phrase with the people repeating. After each phrase we would wait for the bell to start the next phrase. Another song might be **By the Babylonian Rivers** from Latvia.

Psalm 130

bell **Reader:** Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

bell **Reader:** Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

bell **Reader:** If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
Who could stand?

bell **Reader:** But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

Song or Antiphon or Prayer Response

We used the words “Saranam, Saranam, Saranam” from **Jesus, Saviour, Lord** by D.T. Niles

bell **Reader:** I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
I wait for the Lord.

bell

Antiphon

We used a soloist singing “Jesus, Saviour, Lord lo, to thee I fly” and the people singing “Saranam, Saranam, Saranam”.

bell **Reader:** But we do not wait for governments to stop the corruption, which kills.

bell **Reader:** We do not wait to stop the loss of doctors and nurses migrating from the developing world.

bell **Reader:** We do not wait to find funding so mothers do not pass HIV to their newborn babies.

bell

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Antiphon

We used a soloist singing, “Thou the Rock, my refuge that’s higher than I” and the people singing “Saranam, Saranam, Saranam”.

bell **Reader:** My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning,

bell **Reader:** But we do not wait for all churches to give good information about HIV prevention to their youth.

bell **Reader:** We do not wait for clean water and good food, so people can benefit from the medicines they receive.

bell **Reader:** We do not wait for pastors and priests to be leaders so people living with HIV are welcomed into the church.

Antiphon

We had a soloist sing, “In the midst of foes I cry to thee, from the ends of earth wherever I may be, my strength in helplessness, O answer me” and the people singing “Saranam, Saranam, Saranam”.

bell **Reader:** Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, with the Lord there is steadfast love, love.

bell **Reader:** And with God is great power to redeem. Great power to redeem.

bell

Antiphon

We used a soloist singing, “Thou the Rock, my refuge that’s higher than I” and the people singing “Saranam, Saranam, Saranam”.

bell

Gospel Reading

Reader: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew chapter 5.

bell **Reader:** When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain;

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bell **Reader:** and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

bell **Reader:** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

bell **Reader:** Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

bell **Reader:** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

bell

Sermon

Delivered in 15-second phrases

Sung Response

We used Remember your servants, Lord.

Russian Orthodox

Re - mem - ber your ser - vants, Lord, when you come in - to your king - dom.

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bell **Reader:** Remember the poor in Spirit.

bell **Reader:** Remember those who mourn.

bell

Sung Response

bell **Leader:** Remember the meek.

bell **Leader:** Remember those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

bell

Sung Response

bell **Leader:** Remember the pure in heart.

bell **Leader:** Remember the peacemakers.

bell **Leader:** Remember the persecuted.

bell **Leader:** Remember all those dying because of AIDS.

bell

Sung Response

bell *At this point in the service, you may wish to remember by name members, friends, and family who have died of AIDS-related illnesses*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

bell **Reader:** We thank you God that no one dies outside your love.

bell **Reader:** You remember each one of us and number the hairs on our head.

bell **Reader:** You speak our names and call us to follow you.

bell **Reader:** We thank you for grandmothers with laps big enough to hold children not their own.

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- bell* **Reader:** We thank you for researchers who continue to seek a vaccine against HIV.
- bell* **Reader:** We thank you for church school teachers who have the courage to talk about sex with their students.
- bell* **Reader:** We thank you for pastors willing to open the door of the church so people living with HIV are invited in.
- bell* **Reader:** We thank you, God, for communities where Christ's renewing love washes away guilt and shame.
- bell* **Reader:** We thank you for places where people can say, "I have HIV," and not be afraid.
- bell* **Reader:** We thank you, God, for sending your Beloved, Jesus Christ, to redeem and heal. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

We say the Lord's Prayer slowly. After each phrase we wait for the bell. Feel free to use the version you prefer.

- bell* **Congregation:** Our Father in heaven
- bell* **Congregation:** hallowed be your name,
- bell* **Congregation:** your kingdom come
- bell* **Congregation:** your will be done
- bell* **Congregation:** on earth as it is in heaven,
- bell* **Congregation:** give us this day our daily bread,
- bell* **Congregation:** and forgive us our sins
- bell* **Congregation:** as we forgive those who sin against us.
- bell* **Congregation:** Save us from the time of trial,
- bell* **Congregation:** and deliver us from evil.
- bell* **Congregation:** For yours is the kingdom and glory and power forever. Amen.
- bell*

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Offering

At this point someone might let people know what the offering will be used for, using phrases within the 15 seconds. The collection is taken up in silence with only the bell ringing.

Hymn

*Use a hymn based on Psalm 23 with phrases short enough that the leader can sing a phrase and the people repeat it within the 15 seconds. We used the first verse of **The King of Love My Shepherd Is**, lined out phrase by phrase and repeated by the congregation.*

For example, the song leader sings “Such perfect love my Shepherd shows,” (these are more inclusive words than the original ones) and the people repeat. Then the song leader sings, “whose goodness fails me never,” and the people repeat. The songs leader sings, “whose hand all things I need bestows,” and the people repeat. To finish the verse the song leader sings, “and watches me forever,” and the people repeat.

Henry W. Baker: England

Irish melody

1. Such per - fect love my Shep - herd shows, whose good - ness fails me
 2. I do not fear death's shad - owed vale when you are here be -

nev - er, whose hand all things I need be - stows and watch - es me for - ev - er.
 side me: your rod and staff, my com - fort still, your cross be - fore to guide me.

Psalm 23

bell **Reader:** The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
 Leader: I shall not want.
 Congregation: I shall not want

bell **Reader:** He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;
 Leader: Beside still waters
 Congregation: Beside still waters

bell **Reader:** He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
 Leader: For his name's sake
 Congregation: For his name's sake.

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bell **Reader:** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I fear no evil;
 Leader: I fear no evil
 Congregation: I fear no evil

bell **Reader:** For you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.
 Leader: They comfort me.
 Congregation: They comfort me.

bell **Reader:** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
 Leader: You prepare a table before me
 Congregation: You prepare a table before me

bell **Reader:** You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
 Leader: My cup overflows.
 Congregation: My cup overflows.

bell **Reader:** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
 Leader: All the days of my life
 Congregation: All the days of my life.

bell **Reader:** And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
 Leader: Forever.
 Congregation: Forever.

bell

Hymn

Another verse of the hymn above lined out for the congregation. We used the verse, which starts, “I do not fear death’s shadowed veil”.

bell

Closing Prayer

Leader: Grant eternal rest to all who are dying from AIDS-related illness,

bell **Leader:** O Lord, grant rest from every affliction.

bell **Leader:** May a choir of angels receive them, may they have eternal rest. Amen.

bell

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Sung Kyrie Eleison (Lord have mercy)

We used a Kyrie from Ghana with the leader singing a phrase and people repeating it, alternating with the ringing of the bell.

Silence

bell

Benediction

Leader: May God bless you and keep you. May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

bell **Leader:** May God inspire your leadership and action. Now and forever. Amen.

Silence

bell *The bells continue for a while.*