



Order for Ecumenical Worship

 **World AIDS Day**

1 December 2002

**Ecumenical Advocacy
Alliance**

150, route de Ferney
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

**Alianza Ecu mica de
Acci n Mundial**

150, route de Ferney
Apartado postal 2100
1211 Ginebra 2
Suiza

**Alliance Oecum nique
«Agir Ensemble»**

150, route de Ferney
Case postale 2100
1211 Gen ve 2
Suisse

**Globales  kumenisches
Aktionsb ndnis**

150, route de Ferney
Postfach 2100
1211 Genf 2
Schweiz

 + 41 22 791 6723
 + 41 22 710 2387
 info@e-alliance.ch
www.e-alliance.ch



We care...do you? The Churches say YES!

**World AIDS Day
1 December 2002**



This order for ecumenical worship has been prepared for use on World AIDS Day 2002 – 1 December – which also falls upon the first Sunday of Advent. This service may also be used at other appropriate times throughout the year.

The Campaign

This service is one step you can take to join a global movement to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Churches and related-organizations around the world have committed themselves to work together in common advocacy on HIV/AIDS through the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. Because all churches are either living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, and because HIV/AIDS touches on many fundamental teachings and practices of the church, this pandemic challenges the very essence of what it means to be the church and live out the love of Christ in the world.

Join Alliance participants around the world in our three-year campaign to advocate for:

- **the dignity and rights** of people living with HIV/AIDS and for an attitude of care and solidarity that rejects all forms of stigmatization and discrimination;
- **HIV/AIDS prevention** activities that address root causes of vulnerability;
- **mobilization of resources** to prevent HIV/AIDS and for care and treatment of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS;
- **increasing access** to care and treatment for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

The theme

Overcoming stigma and discrimination against people affected by HIV/AIDS is a key emphasis for the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance during 2002-2003.

This service, therefore, is based upon the Gospel text of Luke 19: 1-10 – the story of Zacchaeus. The service provides for the dramatic retelling of this story of a person who was excluded, shut out, and stigmatized in his community (these are often the most painful symptoms experienced by a person living with HIV/AIDS). And yet it was Jesus who saw Zacchaeus through the crowd, called to him, and went to his house – overcoming stigma and discrimination with love and by example.

Stigma and discrimination are the major obstacles to effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Fear of discrimination may prevent people from seeking treatment for AIDS or from acknowledging their HIV status publicly. People with, or suspected of having, HIV may be turned away from health care services, denied housing and employment, shunned by their friends and colleagues, turned down for insurance coverage or refused entry into foreign countries. In some cases, they may be evicted from home by their families, divorced by their spouses, rejected by their church, and suffer physical violence or even murder. The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS may extend into the next generation, placing an emotional burden on children who may also be trying to cope with the death of their parents from AIDS.

We join with UNAIDS in their two-year World AIDS Campaign 2002-2003, which will focus on eliminating stigma and discrimination. With this focus, the Campaign will encourage people to break the silence and the barriers to effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Only by confronting stigma and discrimination will the fight against HIV/AIDS be won.

Using this service

This service is one resource for your local parish, class, school, or Bible-study group. It can be used most powerfully if you seek out and join together with other Christians in your community for ecumenical worship together.

This order of worship bears no copyright and you are welcome to use it freely. It is provided in a form with instructions for leaders which you may easily “cut” out and “paste” in your own selections for hymns or prayers. The service is also available in Spanish, French and German.

As you plan this service, think carefully about how you can invite and involve people who are living with HIV or AIDS in this service. Be intentional about participation, but sensitive to their wishes when it comes to public knowledge of their status.

Additional resource materials for learning and action are available from the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance www.e-alliance.ch Consider combining the use of this worship with a panel discussion, Sunday School lessons, or other opportunities for learning and action.

World AIDS Day and other campaign materials are also available from UNAIDS at www.unaids.org

Share your experience

Let us know about your plans to use this service, your experience, and how we can help.

Thanks

Special thanks are expressed to Rev. Terry MacArthur and Rev. Dr. Rebecca Larson for creation of this service.



Ecumenical Worship Service

L : Leader

P: People

Prelude

Greeting

L : With the pressing crowds, searching for healing and hope,

P: We wish to see Jesus.

L : With the pushed out and cast aside, with the lonely lost, stripped of pride,

P: We wish to see Jesus.

L : With those who seek mystery and meaning, wisdom and grace,

P: We wish to see Jesus.

Hymn

Prayer

L : *Good teacher,
who knows how to cross boundaries,
who spans generations,
who links hands with hand,
and turns the unwanted into a faithful band,
on this World AIDS Day we turn to you.*

*When we make a wall, you build a bridge,
When we draw a line, you step across,
When we shut the door with trembling,
You stand in our midst and say,
Do not be afraid.*

*Good teacher, show us the way to an eternal life,
in which all are healed,
all are saved through your cross,
and all are made new by your resurrection. Amen.*

Gospel Drama

(A small group prepares a drama to act out the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). The story is to be acted out several times during the worship service, each time with the addition of another scene. The characters are Jesus, Zacchaeus, the crowd and a director. The persons playing Jesus and Zacchaeus are identified in some way. This could be as simple as the name on a piece of paper that is hung around their necks. To begin the action the person who is playing the part of the director shouts "Begin!" or if the image is a movie, "Roll!". The crowd gathers tightly around Jesus, and Zacchaeus tries to see over the crowd. This can be a bit overdone so that Zacchaeus jumps up on shoulders, tries to crawl between legs etc. This scene is very quick and does not go on long at all. The director yells "Stop!" or "Cut!")

Response to the Word

L: Why could Zacchaeus not reach Jesus? "On account of the crowd," Luke reports. Since childhood many of us have learned that Zacchaeus was too short to see Jesus. We always thought that was the problem. But we never noticed that Luke says the problem was "on account of the crowd." The crowd wanted to be near Jesus. The crowd loved Jesus and maybe never realized that it was shutting someone else out. Maybe the crowd was a selfish crowd and wanted to keep Jesus for itself. Maybe the crowd was a self-righteous crowd and thought there was no place near Jesus for a rich tax collector.

It is not automatic that the closer we get to Jesus the more open we are. Sometimes we become a crowd, a searching, selfish, wanting crowd, claiming Jesus for ourselves, but at the same time becoming a barrier to others. Sometimes in our desire to see Jesus we keep others from seeing him.

We need to ask questions. How does our community keep others away from Jesus? With what actions, small and large, have we communicated to those living with HIV/AIDS that they cannot get near the Saving One? Why? When has our community, our church, become an interfering crowd?

Silence for Reflection

Hymn

Gospel Drama

(The director starts the action over again from the beginning. What was done before is repeated. Then Zacchaeus quickly gets tired of not getting through the crowd. Zacchaeus runs ahead to find a tree. This could be the pulpit or a table with a branch on it. Jesus and the crowd move towards the tree. When Jesus is right near Zacchaeus he stops. He gestures towards Zacchaeus. Two gestures are important. The first is that Zacchaeus is to come down. The second is that Jesus is going to the house of Zacchaeus. The crowd is amazed. Maybe they make a communal gasp. Then the director yells "Cut!".)

Response to the Word

L: Those whom the crowd shuts out often become very creative. Ways must be found to counter the crowd. Zacchaeus climbed a tree, a place from which he could see, and maybe at the same time hide. When Jesus comes he notices the one up a tree. The crowd is surprised, both at Zacchaeus and at Jesus - surprised that the chief tax collector risked looking foolish; surprised that Jesus was talking with him.

But bold, creative, and sometimes foolish looking responses break through barriers. Let us listen to some who have been shut out and kept away and yet found their way to Jesus.

(Two witnesses from the HIV/AIDS community share briefly their stories of creative ways of overcoming stigma and discrimination. A song could be sung after each witness.)

Gospel Drama

(The director starts the action from the beginning again. It continues with Zacchaeus coming down out of the tree and walking with Jesus away from the crowd. Maybe Zacchaeus gets a cup of tea for Jesus. At this point the crowd grumbles, talking with each other using pointing gestures. The director yells "Cut!".)

Prayer of Confession

L: Let us pray.

You were accused, Good Teacher.
You ate with sinners.
You touched the unclean.
You offended common decency.

We had thought you came to bless us,
but you keep going to those we do not understand,
those we do not trust,
those we fear.

We want you to confirm our prejudices,
but you shatter them.
Samaritans, children, lepers, women, tax collectors, a sick friend, a dead daughter,
All of these you blessed and healed.
Those we distance ourselves from, you actually touch.

We grumble at you,
not sure that we can follow you in this way,
not strong enough to overcome what we have always been taught,
not open enough to see the depth and breadth of your grace.

Forgive us Jesus,
turn our grumbling into acts of courage.
Turn our codes of conduct into the conduct of compassion.
Turn our condemnation of the failures of others
into the awareness of our failure to love others with your grace and compassion.

Forgive us Jesus and make us new,
until we become one with the lost ones,
until we become lost in your love.
Amen.

Silence for Reflection

Gospel Drama

(The action again starts at the beginning of the story and continues with Zacchaeus pulling out money. Maybe he makes a gesture with four fingers, as an indication that he is returning four-fold to those he has defrauded.)

Response to the Word

L: Zacchaeus' response to Jesus is extravagant. He promises to give away half of his wealth to the poor, and if he has defrauded anyone, he will return it fourfold.

Today Jesus has come to this house. In a moment we will have an offering. We can give from what we have, large or small, so that people living with HIV/AIDS can live without stigma or condemnation. Today our offering will go towards _____.

But maybe the encounter with Zacchaeus and Jesus stirs within you another response, one of action in addition to money. When he visited Zacchaeus, Jesus broke through the walls of stigma and discrimination. What does Jesus call forth in you?

You are invited to make a commitment of what you can do so that people with HIV/AIDS will live in dignity and hope. Write your commitment on a piece of paper and include it as part of your

offering. Today Jesus is visiting you. What can you offer so that all will feel welcomed and valued and able to share in the love of Jesus? After the offering is received we will read aloud some of the commitments made today.

Offering

(The members of the drama group might collect the offering, both money and the pieces of paper with commitments written on them. The leaders need to quickly read the commitments and choose several to read aloud. Some music might be played during the offering or a hymn sung.)

Prayers

(Prayers of thanksgiving are offered and some of the commitments are read.)

(Prayers of intercession are offered including petitions for the ministry of the church, people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, and those who have died.)

Lord's Prayer

Gospel Reading: Luke 19:1-10

(The whole story is now read aloud from the pulpit or the lectern.)

Response to the Word

L: Would it not be good if salvation and healing, love and hope came to every person living with HIV/AIDS? Jesus announces the good news. To everyone who suffers the horror of stigma, to everyone who feels they must hide away, to everyone who carries the weight of guilt and shame, Jesus says: "Today salvation has come to your house because you, too, are a child of God." Because Jesus came to seek and to save, he will not rest until they he finds all those who need him. This Jesus, whom we name the Christ, will not stop searching until he finds us and makes us his own. This is our claim and this is our hope.

The Sending Forth

L: You can heal, Christ has touched you.
You can love, Christ has sought you.
You can give yourself away.
Christ has come walking and called you.
You can break the barriers from which others suffer.
Christ has visited your house.
Christ is in you and around you.
Christ will set you free.

Benediction

Hymn