

**A Liturgy for Prayer for People with AIDS
and other Life Threatening Illnesses
November 11, 2018
John Smith**

Call to Worship

One: God consoles us in all our afflictions.

Many: Let us also console those who are afflicted.

One: Take strength from each other, the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us.

Many: We are stronger together, and our consolation is abundant through Christ.

One: May God who creates and sustains us be with us and bless us this day.

Many: Praise be to God who continues to give us strength.

Opening Prayer

God of Hope,

All of us have been affected by diseases which threaten life.

Diseases such as AIDS, cancer, Alzheimer's threaten to drive us into fear and despair.

However we thank you that your perfect love casts out fear and gives us hope.

All around us we see growing understanding, medical advances, changing attitudes and behavior, and greater awareness and concern in your church.

Holy Spirit, tie us together with strong ties of love.

May we be a church where all can find acceptance and refuge.

May we be a place where those experiencing illness will find welcome and safety.

May we be a people who care and love for others as you have cared and loved us.

May all of this be done for the glory of you son Jesus the Christ who with you and the Holy Spirit are glorified forever and ever. Amen.

Call to Confession

God welcomes meets us where we are. While we are yet sinners Christ died for us.

We are sinners for whom Christ died. We are sick and need to be healed. Let us come before God humbly asking forgiveness.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Welcoming God, we acknowledge that too often we do not love others as you love us. You receive us as we are, yet we reject those that come to us. We have been given mercy, but we withhold it from others. Forgive us God. Allow us to be a place where the inclusive love of Christ is seen and felt. Let us be a place of healing and a place where wholeness is offered and received. Make us whole again we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

God is present. God has called us here and welcomes us here. God offers us acceptance and peace.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

O God, let us hear these words of hope and healing from your word. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Isaiah 53: 1-12 or Jeremiah 8: 18-22
- Psalm 103
- James 5: 13-16 or 2 Corinthians 1: 3-11
- Matthew 8: 1-17

- Hope, God's comfort in the midst of affliction, the welcoming nature of Christ (in the gospel passage he "touches" the leper)
- Emphasize the identification of Christ with the afflicted. Christ suffers alongside. They do not suffer long.
- Do research on AIDS and some of these other illnesses. Look at the statistics and some of the advancements in research.
- Fight against the stigma that so many illnesses, especially AIDS, have built up in our society. The afflicted sought out Jesus and he by passed the stigma (once again Jesus "touched" the Leper)

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God the Father, who is holy love. God, by word and action, invites all person into a covenant relationship. God acts to heal the brokenness and alienation caused by sin and to restore the human family to community through the reconciliation effected in Jesus Christ. God never leaves or forsakes God's people.

We believe in God the Son, the eternal Word made flesh. He is always the essence of the one covenant of grace. Jesus accomplished God's mighty act of reconciling love. Jesus willingly suffered sin and death for every person. On the third day after being crucified, Christ was raised from the dead, appeared to many disciples, afterward ascended to God, and makes intercessions for all persons.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who continues to act redemptively in the world. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God creates the Church for mission in this world. We, as God's people, continue to look forward to the consummation of history at the coming of Jesus Christ, when all the kingdoms of the world shall

become the kingdom of the Lord and his Christ and God shall reign forever and ever.

—based on various sections of the Confession of Faith

Litany of Prayer

God, you are our creator, you have called us to wholeness and salvation.

All: Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, you have given us abundant life.

All: Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Holy Spirit, we have been made your temple.

All: Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from our broken bodies and hearts caused by sicknesses such as AIDS, cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases which medical science has yet to find a cure.

All: Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from the grief that continues to pain our spirits and minds and leave us empty about the meaning of life.

All: Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from the social stigma that comes with disease.

All: Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Christ who taught us to pray...**Our Father...**

Invitation to the Offering

I appeal to you therefore, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.

—Romans 12:1

Offertory Prayer

God of healing and wholeness, we thank you that you have not left us. We stand on the promise that you will never forsake us. We grow stronger knowing that you will comfort us in the midst of affliction, pain, and disease. We cling to the hope, knowing that there is a day when crying and pain shall be no more. Help us, by your Spirit to continue to receive your power into our lives and to trust in your love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

(As the congregation says, “We send to the cross of Christ” they can make a sweeping gesture with their hands toward the cross at the front of the sanctuary. In the final statement, they can lift their hands to heaven in symbolism of lifting our hopes to Christ.)

All our problems and grief
We send to the cross of Christ.

All our sickness and pain
We send to the cross of Christ.

All the devil’s works
We send to the cross of Christ.

All our hopes
We set on the risen Christ.

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path: and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

—based on the Kenyan Rite of the Eucharist, Kenyan Book of Common Prayer