

**Support World AIDS Day
December 1st
www.worldaidscampaign.org**

Educate and inform yourself about the issues from the websites below, attend workshops and other activities.

Encourage constructive dialogue about the issues among your family, friends, church members, clergy, church-council members and others.

What You Can Do

Inform yourself about HIV and AIDS issues.

The Riverside Church www.theriversidechurchny.org

UCC HIV and AIDS Network www.ucaninc.org

Balm in Gilead www.balmingilead.org

AIDS Service Center NYC www.ascnyc.org

NYC Faith in Action for HIV/AIDS
Prevention, Care and Education
Coalition www.nycfia.org

Gay Men's Health Crisis www.gmhc.org

Latino Commission on AIDS www.latinoaids.org

Conscious Contact of NY www.ccofnyc.org

New York City Department
of Health and Mental Hygiene www.nyc.gov/html/doh

Know Your Status

Free & anonymous HIV testing at the following locations:

East Harlem

158 East 115th Street (off Lexington)
(212) 360-5931

Chelsea

303 9th Avenue (at 28th Street)
(212) 239-1718

Riverside

160 West 100th Street (between Columbus/Amsterdam)
(212) 865-7757

For updated information:

www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/std/std2.shtml

**The Riverside Church
in the City of New York**

**POWER IN THE PEWS!!
A CALL TO ACTION
December 1st
The HIV and AIDS Pandemic**

The AIDS epidemic has rolled back a big rotting log and revealed all the squirming life underneath it, since it involves, all at once, the main themes of our existence: sex, death, power, money, love, hate, disease and panic. No American phenomenon has been so compelling since the Vietnam War.

-Edmund White

In the time that it takes you to read this card, thousands of persons around the world will die from AIDS. There is no cure. Domestically, New York City is the epicenter of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the United States.

Impact of HIV and AIDS in New York

121,643 people in the state of New York are known to be living with HIV or AIDS. Most live in New York City, but 23% of HIV/AIDS cases are outside of the city.

As of December 2007, 20,201 African Americans in New York state had HIV. HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect communities of color. This is especially true among men who have sex with men, women, youth, immigrants and migrants.

Harlem is also struggling with HIV and AIDS. In 2002, there were 5,907 people living with HIV/AIDS in Harlem. In that same year, 46% of people living with HIV/AIDS in Harlem had a history of injection drug use.

At the end of 2007, 8,190 young people (ages 13 to 29) in New York City were living with HIV or AIDS.

While the majority of people get diagnosed with HIV before they're 40, 73% of people living with HIV/AIDS are over 40 years old.

As of 2007, an estimated 690,000 to 1,900,000 persons in the United States were living with HIV.

In 2007, rates of AIDS diagnoses decreased among blacks but were still higher than the rates of any other race/ethnicity.

The vision which fueled our struggle for freedom; the development of energies and resources; the unity and commitment of common goals—all these will be needed if we are to bring AIDS under control...

--Nelson Mandela

Source: New York State Department of Health

New HIV Prevention in Church and Community

Every 9 ½ minutes, someone in the U.S. is newly infected with HIV.

Efforts to stop HIV and AIDS and provide treatment and care to all who are living with and affected by HIV continue to be outpaced by the incidence of new HIV infections. To turn the tide on this pandemic, we must continue to rapidly increase our capacities to reach universal access to treatment and care and, at the same time, we must radically reduce the number of new infections. Therefore, comprehensive HIV prevention must be an integral part of the response in all settings of the church and community.

The HIV and AIDS pandemic is one of the most serious health crises the world has ever faced. In response, the international HIV and AIDS organizations have called for the scaling up of prevention efforts.

When it adopted the resolution, ***Calling for Comprehensive HIV Prevention in Church and Community (June 2009)***, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ called on the church and community to take everyone's role and responsibility seriously for HIV prevention.

The United Church of Christ has been at the forefront of this ongoing struggle to eradicate HIV and AIDS. From the local churches to the General Synod, from World AIDS Day observances to comprehensive HIV and AIDS outreach programs, there have been and continue to be important and significant responses from various settings of the UCC. However, the responses have not yet measured up to the need, particularly with comprehensive HIV prevention and also in terms of reaching vulnerable groups and higher risk populations.

We call on all persons of faith to:

- become knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS,
- understand how HIV is transmitted and how it is prevented,
- know your HIV status,
- work to prevent its transmission
- reduce stigma and discrimination, and
- help the whole church to increase its HIV competency

We already know that stigma and discrimination create an environment that fuels this disease, but we have not yet broken the silence in our churches and communities. We need to provide age appropriate, comprehensive HIV prevention information. We already know that treatment and care are an important aspect of effective HIV prevention, but we have not yet accessed our full capacity for universal treatment and care. The truth is-- we already know that HIV is 100% preventable. This question is, do we share this vision and will we do what it takes to live the promise to stop HIV?

Inspirational Thought for Prayer and Meditation

**Rev. Robert B. Coleman
Chief Program Minister
The Riverside Church in the City of New York**

There are no human eyes that have seen a quark. However, scientists have been awarded the Nobel Prize for research pointing to evidence of the existence of quarks. The seen experience of scientists in the laboratory lends them credible assurance that a thing they call a quark exists, though the quark is unseen. Repeated experiments give consistent data to support their arguments. Collective seen experiences are used to support the existence of something that is unseen.

John Polkinghorne shared this story of science and quarks in a book entitled, *Living with Hope*, co. 2003, WJK Press. He was paralleling the search for knowledge in the laboratory with the search for truth in human experience; particularly the interaction of a God who comes to us in ways unseen.

As we humans struggle against the realities of suffering that accompany HIV/AIDS in the world today, we are challenged to trust in both the seen and unseen in science and in theology. The gifts of those who work tirelessly in the laboratory are joined by the gifts of those who work tirelessly in their prayers, presence, and intercession on behalf of all people. How remarkable it is to embrace this holy union of critical thought and transcendent benevolence. How remarkable it is when we support the work of the scientist and the prayer partner. It is God's good pleasure to give us God's realm...a realm where life is abundant, love and mercy bathe us all. (Read Luke 12:22-32) Let us consider the work of humankind in concert with the pleasure of a God who wants us to have abundant life. This emboldens our vision of a hoped-for world without HIV/AIDS. Take heart one and all.