



UCAN News

United Church of Christ HIV/AIDS Network

Volume I, Issue I

Fall 2007

Special points of interest:

- God is Still Speaking on HIV and AIDS
- Know Your HIV Status

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UCAN Hosts HIV Testing Site at General Synod 26

HIV testing is vitally important in the fight against HIV and AIDS on many levels. HIV testing is not only a vital practice in maintaining good personal health, but it also can effectively be used to initiate more awareness, education and involvement on many levels in the movement to prevent and stop HIV and AIDS.

When discussing and considering HIV testing, initial conversations concerning prevention education can take place (which are laid out in more detail in the UCC HIV/AIDS curriculum: *Affirming Persons-Saving Lives*) in ways that may not have been possible before. When discussing and considering HIV testing, the work of those already participating in HIV/AIDS work, like UCAN, including its Technical Assistance Program, advocacy work and so much more, can often be lifted up and made known to those who previously were unaware of this work. When HIV testing is discussed,

considered and done, more people, who may not have been very involved previously, have a new opportunity to join in the fight against HIV and AIDS. For it truly does take each one of us to combat a monster as large as HIV and AIDS.

Recognizing this multifaceted value of HIV testing, UCAN organized a day of HIV testing at General Synod 26, the largest UCC gathering in the denomination's history. Trained testers from the Hartford Department of Health provided HIV testing for nearly 30 General Synod delegates, visitors, and friends at the Hartford Civic Center on Monday June 25, 2007. In the midst of committee meetings, volunteer work and so much more, individuals found the time to take the rapid test and get their results immediately. Among those tested were four members of the Collegium, the officers of the

national setting of the Church.

The impact of this first National UCC Testing Day was great, raising awareness on so many levels, as the fight against HIV and AIDS continues!



Rev. Cally Rogers Witte, Executive for Wider Church Ministries, receives her HIV test by a City of Hartford Health Department worker. Randy Varcho photo

UCAN Incorporates as 501c3

At the April 2007 meeting of the Wider Church Ministries (WCM) Board of Directors a proposal was approved to create a 501c3, nonprofit corporation for the United Church of Christ HIV/AIDS Network (UCAN). The new UCAN corporation will operate as an affiliate organization of WCM, focusing on HIV and AIDS education, prevention, care-giving

and advocacy.

As its own 501c3, UCAN should be better positioned to qualify for private and public funding to build the capacity of the United Church of Christ to respond to the HIV pandemic. The Ark of Refuge in San Francisco is an example of a how this can work. An organization related to City of Refuge UCC,

The Ark of Refuge has received CDC and State grants to run various HIV programs.

The Health and Wholeness Advocacy (HWA) Office of WCM will still be engaged in certain facets of HIV ministry, including public policy advocacy. The Executive for HWA, Mike Schuenemeyer, will serve as the Executive Director of UCAN,



Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer
Executive Director

“We must all do something, and then turn around and do something more. It is the only way we will be able to keep the promise to stop AIDS.”

Mike
Schuenemeyer



From the Desk of the Executive Director

We are now in the 26th year of HIV and AIDS. We've known for more than 15 years how to prevent the spread of HIV, yet more people in the world are living with HIV today than ever before (est. 39 million). Millions of them do not even know they are infected. Of the estimated 1 million persons living with HIV in the US, 25% do not know they are infected, yet research continues

to show that when people know their status they are less likely to engage in behaviors that spread HIV and infection rates go down.

UCAN is helping congregations explore ways to encourage HIV testing. Some congregations include HIV testing as part of their health fair, Others have HIV testing information in their information rack, including where people can go locally

to get tested. Give us a call and we'll provide the technical assistance you need to do a "Take the Test" campaign in your community.

We must all do something and then turn around and do something more. It is the only way we will be able to keep the promise to stop AIDS. Taking the test is a very important something to do.

Your UCAN Board of Directors

Leonard Conner is involved in several areas of HIV and AIDS service, education and prevention, under the umbrella of Refuge Ministries in San Francisco, which includes being the Contract Compliance Officer for the Ark of Refuge and the Chief Financial Officer of the Yvette A. Flunder Foundation--which provides support to, among other causes, an orphanage, school and clinic for AIDS orphans in Zimbabwe, Africa. Leonard also is the chairperson of the UCAN Leadership Team.

Ken Daniels is Vice President of Senior Living Services for Phoebe Ministries in Allentown, PA. He is the principal director of the continuing care campus that includes independent living, assisted living, nursing and rehab for over 600 residents daily. A graduate of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Ken serves on the board of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, the board of Wider Church Ministries for the United Church of Christ and was recently appointed to the board for Common Global Ministries. Ken also holds graduate degrees from Moravian Theological Seminary and Marywood University. Ken is married to the Rev. Dr. Bar-

bara Kershner Daniel.

Oliver Martin is a member of the UCAN Leadership Team. He serves as a lay leader in HIV and AIDS ministry on a local, state and national level. Oliver serves as co-chair of the Riverside Church Global HIV/AIDS Ministry. Oliver is also the CEO of Conscious Contact of New York and is on the Board of Directors of the AIDS Service Center in New York City. He has been nominated as the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns representative to the WCM Board class of 2013.

Elaine Miller is from Beresford, South Dakota., serving the S.D. Conference as the Administrator/Registrar of the Yankton College School of Theology. She also serves the Wakonda UCC as part-time Pastor and the Vermillion UCC as part-time Assistant Pastor. She represents South Dakota as a Board member for Wider Church Ministries. Elaine has two adult children, Karl (26), of Maui, Hawaii, and Karyn Schwagel (24) and husband, Fran, and grandchild #1, Ella (5 months). They live nearby in Vermillion, S.D.

Leslie Penrose is a member of the UCAN Leadership Team. She most recently

served as the founding pastor of Community of Hope UCC, an open and affirming, HIV-supportive congregation in Tulsa, OK. Leslie has served on the UCC Boards of Directors of Justice and Witness Ministries and the Executive Council. Locally she serves as the Director of Ministerial Formation for UCC Students at Phillips Theological Seminary; is on the Board of Directors for Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry, and on the Conference Council of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference. She is a trained dispute resolution facilitator, and serves as a consultant to churches working to develop partnerships with congregations in Nicaragua.

Bing Tso – is Asian American, a layman who is 40-49 years old. He has served as Moderator/governing board member of both Prospect UCC, Seattle and Bethany UCC, Seattle. He is the Secretary of the North Beacon Hill Community Council, Founder and current chair of Maple Hill Block Watch, and a member of the water conservation committee, Pacific NW Section of AWWA. He has been nominated as the Pacific Northwest Conference representative to the WCM Board class of 2013.

Living Positively: We are all Living with HIV

Written by: Patricia Eldridge

At the time I was diagnosed as HIV Positive "We Are All Living With HIV" was one of the slogans people used to spread education. Today this has become a hauntingly true statement.

I work in corporate America, I am a church member, I am a mother to an 11 year old boy and I have had HIV for twelve years. Throughout my day most of the people I encounter would never guess my status. The irony of the situation is unless they have been tested they do not know theirs either. Because I was diagnosed early I

have been able to stay physically healthy. But because God has placed mentors and loving people in my life I have been able to stay spiritually healthy.

However, even as I write, people are dying. They are dying because they do not have the right information, because they have insufficient resources, or because they feel like they cannot tell anyone their status. I have shared my testimony in a variety of venues. Every time I do, it is with the hope to liberate, heal, and perhaps even save a life. After years of hearing people teach about fearing

HIV, I teach empowerment. As it says in 2nd Timothy, God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

With another World AIDS Day approaching, what will you do differently? What conversation will you have with your friends or your children? How will your churches be supportive to those impacted as well as infected? How will your life reflect the God of love we all serve? I thank God for a Church and a denomination that is willing to talk about real issues and I am hopeful for

Individuals who are willing to act to do something about them.



Patricia Eldridge is a member of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, IL where she works in the HIV AIDS Support Ministry. She has spoken at many different churches, organizations, and universities to raise awareness. Patricia is also currently working on her first book entitled "Not My Will".



From the Desk of the UCAN Newsletter Editor

Blessings to all. As we approach 2008 with Leadership as the World AIDS theme, it is my prayer that each of you, your congregation or community will participate in an HIV and or AIDS awareness event on one of the dates below.

"Be careful how you live, you may be the only Bible some people read."

Yours in the Struggle — Oliver W. Martin III

UCAN Celebrates HIV/AIDS Awareness Days 2008

A number of national and global observances are held annually to help us understand and fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We encourage you to visit this Web site throughout the year and to download materials, educational tools, and information that support of all HIV/AIDS Awareness Days. We hope the resources and information will assist your efforts to educate, motivate, and mobilize your local community in the fight against HIV/AIDS!

www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays

- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, February 7
- National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, March 10
 - National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day March 20
 - National HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, May 18
- National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, MAY 19
- National Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, June 8
 - National HIV Testing Day, June 27
- National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, October 15
 - World AIDS Day 2008, December 1

WORLD AIDS DAY 2007 & 2008

LEADERSHIP



4.3 million people were infected with HIV in 2006—the highest ever in one year. Momentum is growing to reverse this trend, let by those most affected.

Follow their example — take the lead!

The theme for World AIDS Day 2007 and 2008 is “leadership”. This theme will continue to be promoted with the campaigning slogan, “Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise.”

Why leadership?

Since the beginning of the epidemic, experience has clearly demonstrated that significant advances in the response to HIV have been achieved when there is strong and committed leadership. Leaders are distinguished by their action, innovation and vision; their personal example and engagement of others; and their perseverance in the face of obstacles and challenges. However, leaders are often not those in the highest offices. Leadership must be demonstrated at every level to get ahead of the disease – in families, in communities, in countries and internationally. Much of the best leadership on AIDS has been demonstrated within civil society organizations challenging the status quo. Making leadership the theme of the next two World AIDS Days will help encourage leadership on AIDS within all levels and sectors of society. We hope it will

inspire and foster champions within a range of different groups and networks at local and international levels.

Leadership as a theme follows and builds on the 2006 theme of accountability. In 2006 a number of milestones were reached where accountability was particularly crucial. It was the year of the United Nations High Level Meeting on AIDS, which reviewed the progress on the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS – an important blueprint for reaching the Millennium Development Goals on AIDS. 2006 marked the fifth year anniversary of the African Abuja Declaration. 2006 was also the year in which national targets were set, or should have been set, by governments for achieving Universal Access to Treatment, Prevention, Support and Care by 2010. In addition, at 2006’s International AIDS Conference, “accountability” was the buzzword throughout the global forum, reflecting the conference’s theme, “Time to Deliver.”

Despite the efforts to hold leaders accountable in 2006, progress in halting HIV is

falling far short of targets. Over 25 million people have been lost to AIDS so far, and 4.3 million people were infected with HIV 2006. The spread of HIV is quickening – with more people infected in 2006 than in any previous year. This is despite the number of promises by world leaders to provide services to curb the rates of infection and to bring down death rates. The G8 has made commitments on AIDS which now need to be delivered upon. In other high level meetings, governments of rich countries promised to increase the spending on development aid to 0.7 percent of their annual budget. Only a handful of countries have done so. In the Abuja Declaration, African leaders committed to allocating 15 percent of their budgets to health. This has happened in just one or two countries, with only one-third of African countries spending over 10 percent. Promises are not being kept because there is a lack of leadership at every level.

From the World AIDS Campaign, www.worldaidscampaign.org

Take the Lead!



WORLD AIDS DAY FOLDER

World AIDS Day (December 1) is an important occasion for building awareness and joining our lives and spirits in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in our communities and around the world. As you plan for this celebration, you will find many useful resources in the 2007 World AIDS Day Folder, including:

- worship resources
- global and national HIV and AIDS fact sheets
- web links to information and resources
- and more!

Download resources

from the web at:

www.ucc.org/health/hivaids

or

Order the

World AIDS Day Folder

(item # WCMWAF)

from United Church of Christ Resources

1-800-537-3394



STOP AIDS.

LINKS to Resources and Information

United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network	-- www.ucc.org/health/hivaids
Global Ministries, (click on "resources," and then "World AIDS Day")	-- www.globalministries.org
Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance	-- www.e-alliance.ch
Kaiser Family Foundation	-- www.kff.org/hivaids
United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	-- www.unaids.org/en
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	-- www.cdc.gov/hiv
Global AIDS Alliance	-- www.globalaidsalliance.org
National Association of People with AIDS	-- www.napwa.org
The Balm in Gilead	-- www.balmingilead.org
National Minority AIDS Council	-- www.nmac.org



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KEEP THE PROMISE.



Religious Pre-Conference
July 31-August 1, 2008,
Mexico City
[www.e-alliance.ch/
 iac_2008.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/iac_2008.jsp)

XVII International
AIDS Conference
August 3-8, 2008,
Mexico City
www.aids2008.org

Religious Pre-Conference Planned for XVII International AIDS Conference

In preparation for the XVII International AIDS Conference, to be held in Mexico City, 3-8 August, 2008, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance has again set up a listserv for those interested in participating in the IAC's issues and events from a faith-based perspective.

The listserv will serve as a tool to share plans for the AIDS 2008 Ecumenical Pre-Conference and ecumenical and multifaith activities in the main AIDS 2008 Conference.

As plans develop, more information will also be posted at:

[Religious Pre-Conference](http://www.e-alliance.ch/iac_2008.jsp)
www.e-alliance.ch/iac_2008.jsp

[XVII International AIDS Conference](http://www.aids2008.org)
www.aids2008.org

We look forward to seeing you in Mexico!

***“All of our lives
 are richer and
 more
 meaningful
 because of the
 struggle to
 connect to “the
 least of these.”***

- Rev. Doug Horner



St. Paul's Outreach Team

Written by Rev. Doug Horner

We can't give up hope that the church will answer the call to walk with, hold up and heal those affected by HIV and AIDS. St. Paul's Community Church, UCC, on Cleveland's Near West Side, constantly tries to answer this call.

St. Paul's has developed a non-profit agency (St. Paul's Outreach Program) in response to the increasing needs of the city. We have recruited experts and visionaries for the board and hired outreach workers who comb the streets, soup kitchens and homeless shelters to connect with, educate and journey with those who would otherwise remain locked in cycles of

pain, ignorance, poverty and despair. Each month, four outreach workers from St. Paul's build relationships with and help transform the lives of over 200 male and female commercial sex workers, homeless, and low income people roaming the streets of Cleveland. Help is needed on all levels, from adequate health care (including comprehensive HIV prevention and care) to bus tickets, food, clothing, safe shelter, decent employment and above all, the self-confidence and ability to face one more day, clean and sober.

At St. Paul's, we balance on the precipice where God calls us. Even though it seems as if funding is always low, the church van is on its

last legs, and quality volunteers are few and far between, we press on; our commitment does not waver. We keep coming back to the understanding that if God has called us to this mission, God will provide the protection, strength, resources, people and dedication to the tasks. That is a lifelong spiritual process that has rejuvenated St. Paul's congregation, members, elders and our neighborhood. All of our lives are richer and more meaningful because of the struggle to connect to “the least of these.”

Rev. Doug Horner has been pastor at St. Paul's Community Church, UCC in Cleveland, OH since 2003. Since its incorporation in 2005, Rev. Horner has also been the Executive Director of St. Paul's Outreach Program.

UCAN Is Signatory on National Minority HIV/AIDS Policy White Paper on the Minority AIDS Initiative



A charter member of the National Minority HIV/AIDS Policy Partnership, UCAN is an official signatory on the a white paper on the Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI), *The Minority AIDS Initiative: Meeting the Challenges in Communities of Color Nationwide*.

MAI is the federal program addressing racial and ethnic minority populations infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and related disparities in access to care. MAI funds must be used specifically to serve communities of color.

The white paper addresses changes to the MAI under the Ryan White Treatment Modernization Act of 2006, signed by President Bush

on December 19, 2006. These changes effect how funds are allocated to Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded grantees. The white paper offers some recommendations in response to key consequences of the changes as it sheds light on the very complex nature of the MAI related funding streams. There are three recommendations made in the report:

1. The timely publication of HRSA-related MAI funding allocations and spending.
2. Fully fund the \$610million community ask for the MAI.
3. Allocate specific fund of the MAI towards minority subpopulations.

Facilitate through Na-

tional Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), The National Minority HIV/AIDS Policy Partnership as a coalition of national organizations that represent communities of color. The partnership aims to jointly develop and advance public policies that ensure high quality, culturally appropriate and affordable HIV/AIDS services for people of color living with or at high risk for HIV/AIDS.

Read the white paper: ***The Minority AIDS Initiative: Meeting the Challenges in Communities of Color Nationwide***, is available at the NMAC web site: www.nmac.org/public_policy/

“Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) legislative changes create new barriers for communities of color. This paper aims to highlight new MAI implementation guidelines for our communities while dually challenging the initiative to grow with the demands of our communities.”

***Ravina Hayes-Cozier
NMAC***

Stories from Global Ministries

Many of Global Ministries' partners and personnel around the world focus much of their work on HIV and AIDS. For example, because of help from Global Ministries, a medical team from Peking University was recently able to go to

Zhecheng County, Henan Province, China. The medical team consisted of 7 doctors and professors from the department of gynecology, surgery, internal medicine and infection at Peking University. During the trip, they gave lectures for local doc-

tors and other medical workers from several hospitals, provided care to patients and donated 20 computers to Chengliu, a local primary school.

To find out more about Global Ministries' response to the global AIDS pandemic, go to: www.globalministries.org



a common witness of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

UCAN

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Supporting the UCAN Mission

To support our HIV/AIDS
Ministry, gifts can be sent to
the address above
marked **UCAN**

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Spring 2008

UCAN News, a newsletter of the United Church of Christ HIV/AIDS Network

Technical Assistance for your HIV/AIDS Ministry

Everyone can do something to address HIV and AIDS. UCAN's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) can help your church or organization identify and build your HIV ministry. Our Faith Community Project Coordinators are knowledgeable, experienced, active leaders in their faith communities,

Whether its developing your World AIDS Day program, working with your local health department to provide confidential voluntary HIV testing or training your leaders to teach the UCC's HIV/AIDS curriculum, *Affirming Persons, Saving Lives*, we can help you identify the needs and evaluate your capacity for response.

UCAN recently provided technical assistance to the following:

Mt Zion Congregational UCC,
Cleveland, OH

St. Paul's Community UCC
Cleveland, OH

The Riverside Church
New York, NY

Metro/Suffolk Association of
the New York Conference,
UCC

AIDS Service Center of New
York City—Spiritual Outreach
Service, New York NY



SIGN ME UP!

Subscribe to
UCAN Stop AIDS E-News

Join the
Justice Peace Action Network (JPAN)

at

<http://ga3.org/ucc/join.html>

UCAN's Mission Statement

The mission of the United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network (UCAN) is to build a network of people, congregations and organizations within and beyond the United Church of Christ for care giving, education and prevention in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic by:

- Providing technical assistance to help congregations and other settings of the church start and build their capacity and programs;
- Offering training in the use of the UCC's comprehensive HIV and AIDS curriculum, *Affirming Persons, Saving Lives*, as well as other HIV and AIDS educational resources;
- Giving leadership for education and information on public policy concerns; and
- Prioritizing its work to bring critical presence to those most affected by HIV and AIDS in the United States and throughout the world