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Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you! Thank you for your interest in these resources for World AIDS Day. Today more people are living with HIV than at any time in the 26 years of the pandemic. It will take more than one day's effort for us to turn the tide, to stop the spread of HIV and provide the treatment and care needed by all those infected and affected. Leadership is one of the most important elements of an effective response. For 2007 and 2008, Leadership will be the primary theme for World AIDS Day, under the World AIDS Campaign slogan, "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise."

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 actions, innovations 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 this disease – in families, in communities, in countries and globally. Much of the best leadership on AIDS has been demonstrated within civil society organizations, including communities of faith, which are willing to challenge the status quo. We hope the World AIDS Day theme of leadership will inspire and foster champions within a range of different groups and networks at local and international levels. [For more information: www.worldaidscampaign.org]

Leadership is a reoccurring theme throughout scripture. Individuals repeatedly take the lead by speaking up prophetically and bringing about compassion and justice, whenever and wherever it is needed. Over and over again throughout the biblical story, God continually leads people, equipping them with the gifts needed for leadership in their own right. In Psalm 43, the psalmist, facing some of life's most difficult tribulations, says, "Send out your light and your truth, O God; let them lead me." We continue to need God's light and truth to lead us today, particularly in the face of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. As World AIDS Day 2007 is celebrated in our churches and communities, may we be led by and lead others with God's light and truth. Take the Lead!

Faithfully,



Rev. Michael D. Schuenemeyer
Executive for Health and Wholeness Advocacy

let it shine
the light in 10 years

