

World Mission Council

Church of Scotland HIV Programme

Souper Sunday 2019

Service theme:

'Let your light shine'



Introduction

Welcome to Souper Sunday 2019. This act of worship may be used on any Sunday of the year. This order of service is offered as a guide to how worship might be led in your Souper Sunday celebrations. Souper Sunday is designed to be an elder-led service. You can use it in its entirety, or select parts of it to use – please feel free to adapt it to your own local situation.

Before the service you need to:

- Recruit your participants. Identify roles for each – e.g. worship leader, someone to deliver the all-age talk, people to read and to pray. You may wish to have different people reading different sections of the talk – e.g. one to speak generally, one to read the parts about projects funded by the programme, one to read the repeating bible verse.
- Gather what you need for the all-age talk.
- Prepare a very simple soup and bread lunch for after the service, either in church or (as catering facilities may dictate) at members' homes

We also suggest that you order Gift Aid envelopes from the Church of Scotland HIV Programme for lunch attenders. You might also consider using our optional images, leaflets, PowerPoint presentation, and children's craft resources for your Sunday School or Junior Church.

These resources, along with others, may be ordered by e-mailing hiv@churchofscotland.org.uk
They are also downloadable from www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/world_mission

All hymns noted here are taken from the Church Hymnary Fourth edition (CH4), although other hymns may be substituted. The Bible readings printed in this order of service are taken from the New International Version.

Order of Service

Those leading the service enter and sit in the chancel or delegated seats.

Welcome

Worship leader gives welcome (and intimations), ending with:

Today, our service is a special act of worship led by elders and members of our congregation, as we celebrate “Souper Sunday”. “Souper Sunday” is an initiative of the Church of Scotland HIV Programme. It allows us to look at some of the issues around HIV, as well as to raise money for projects around the world that are responding to the challenge of HIV.

This year, we focus on a passage from Mark’s gospel where Jesus tells us that by shining a light in the darkness, we can be beacons of hope for others.

At the close of our service, everyone (whether church member or visitor here today) is warmly invited to share in a simple lunch of soup and bread. This will take place in (INSERT NAME OF LUNCH VENUE HERE) where there will also be an opportunity to make a donation to benefit the vital work of the Church of Scotland HIV Programme.

And now, let us have a moment of silence as we prepare to worship.

Call to Worship : Psalm 27:1

The LORD is my light and my salvation –
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life –
of whom shall I be afraid?

HYMN CH4 448

Lord the light of Your love is shining

Worship leader : Please be seated

Let us Pray

Approach and confession

Almighty and eternal God, from nothing You brought forth life;
from darkness You brought light;
and from chaos You brought order.

So we worship You,

Forgive us when we doubt Your ability to bring change and to transform lives.

Forgive us when we are slow to play our part in the work of showing and sharing Your love.

Forgive us when we allow our problems to cloud out Your possibilities.

Fill us with your light, and with the confidence
that we have a God for whom nothing is impossible.

Give us grace and strength to be partners in Your work in the world,
that Your light may spread to every place where it is needed.

Bless our worship, teach us from Your word and hear our prayers, in Jesus’ name.

And hear us now as we share together the words of the prayer Jesus taught us,
saying, **Our Father**

Lord’s Prayer

All age talk

Show the children the batteries and ask them what they are (make sure both sets look identical) Talk about what we use batteries for. Then ask someone to put the batteries in the torches. (or to help you do it if the children are small) Then ask the children to tell you what they see – one has a light and one doesn't.

Next ask the children to put the working torch under the basin – can they still see the light? (No) then ask them to put it on the table or shine it on an object.

In this world there are many things that get forgotten because they are hidden, like the light under the basin. Today at Souper Sunday we are thinking about people all around the world who have a bug which can make them ill if they do not have the correct medicine – it is called HIV. People in this country and overseas sometimes ask us to help them, it might be giving money to help pay for their medication, or to buy food or to help them travel to hospital. it's kind of like the light shining on the (object that you used) , once we see the needs of other people then we know how we can help them. .

It may feel very hard for us to make a difference if we do not know what is needed. Just like the batteries without any power cannot show us the way in the dark. But Jesus says that he is the light of the world and that he gives us His power through the Holy Spirit so we can shine like the torch with the fully charged battery and make a difference for the people living with HIV.

Let us Pray

God, help us to be able to see what we can do for other people who are in need in our world today. Amen.

Hymn : CH4 512

We are marching in the light of God

Children leave

Bible readings

Our first reading this morning is taken from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 4, reading from verse 21 to verse 25.

²¹ He said to them, 'Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? ²² For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. ²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.'

²⁴ 'Consider carefully what you hear,' he continued. 'With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more. ²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.'

Our second reading is taken from the book of John 8 :12

¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'

HYMN CH4 748 (Sing to tune CH4 184)

Saints we glimpse the light of Christ

Talk

Imagine if you lived 2000 years ago in the Middle East, when darkness fell, you would light your lamps. Many of them were small cup shaped clay containers filled with oil and a nice trimmed wick. These lamps, when placed on the lamp stand would shine out, illuminating the room so all could be seen. If you did not keep the lamp filled, then you would end up in darkness.

Jesus used the parable of the lamp to tell us 3 things, we need to ensure the lamp is lit, then we need to ensure the lamp is allowed to shine out without hindrance and that the more it shines, the brighter it will become.

The Church of Scotland HIV programme has now been in existence since 2002 and has touched the lives of people all around the world: through care and support, advocacy and education. The initial appeal was sent to all members of the Church of Scotland and since then we have been able to support 95 projects in 21 countries around the world. That 'little lamp' which you lit by putting a donation in that first envelope, together with all the others has shone out in faith and love reflecting the light of Christ. Jesus tells us he is the light of the world and all who follow him shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.

Much has happened since 2002, but for people who are HIV positive, the access to antiretroviral drugs is no doubt the most important change of all. This medication has transformed lives from despair to hope; hope for a future. A future that is bright. One of the people who know of this transformation personally is Andrew. He was diagnosed HIV positive when antiretroviral medication was in its infancy but was able to get them from Ekwendeni Hospital AIDS Programme funded by the Church of Scotland at that time; this saved his life, now he is married with two children. His virus is undetectable in his blood and so is untransmittable. Access to treatment is now not an issue here in Scotland where all who are HIV positive and need medication can access them freely. This is becoming more and more the norm in many of our partner projects overseas but still there are people unable to access medication for a variety of reasons. We need to continue advocating for access to treatment for all. Speaking up and speaking out is one way of continuing to shine our light on the pandemic and ensuring issues are illuminated.

Science continues to play an important role in developing new antiretroviral medications to keep up with the mutation of the virus, but social change is also very important to ensure new infections do not occur and for those who are HIV positive, stigma and discrimination should not be an added burden to bear. It was good to hear the CEO of UNAIDS say publically at the World AIDS Conference in Amsterdam in July 2018 that the faith based communities have been at the forefront of social change in relation to the HIV Pandemic. This has long since been the case as people of faith seek to support sisters and brothers around the world. We are holding high our lamps, being a light to the world.

In 2018, the Church of Scotland HIV Project is supporting 17 projects in 13 countries, often small grassroots initiatives which would find it difficult to receive support from multinational organisations such as UNAIDS, Red Nose day or others. A great example of this is the small scale agricultural support given to People Living with HIV in northern Mozambique, run by our partner the Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique. As well as giving people support in growing nutritional foods which is important for those taking Antiretroviral medication, the input allows staff of the project to come

alongside people, often rejected in their community with love and care. Shining a light in times of darkness.

Arunima Hospice in Kolkata, is a Programme of the Church of North India and seeks to support those infected by HIV and their families in a holistic way. One of the vulnerable groups they work with is the Commercial Sex Workers. They provide health education and counselling as well as nutritional support and respite care when required. This group are doubly stigmatised because of their profession and diagnosis of HIV but yet are treated with dignity and respect by staff. Many of the clients are supported to develop other forms of employment. Arunima Hospice's light shines in the darkness and helps many people to see their life pathway once again after dark times.

And closer to home, Positive Help supports people in Edinburgh and the Lothians who are infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. Our part in that is to help fund the patient transport network which helps to ensure clients get to their hospital and other vital appointments. Hearing from staff at Positive help, the Western General Hospital and from clients themselves, they tell us without this vital service, life would be much more difficult. It is not just a vital and necessary lift to appointments that volunteer drivers give but a lift to mood and a bright interlude to a dark day. Positive Help is 30 years old this year, nearly as old as the HIV Pandemic itself, their amazing work could not happen without the volunteer drivers. Perhaps you could be that person?

Today as we think about the work of the Church of Scotland HIV programme, and reflect on the wider HIV picture, we recognise that today we see HIV and AIDS in a very different light than in days gone by, we now live in a world where we have the tools to end the epidemic in our lifetime but this will only happen if there is the political will to maintain the funding and focus. It is therefore our job as a church to keep the light shining on the epidemic and share the stories of success while spotlighting the continuing needs of our partners around the world as they seek to serve all in need in their communities.

Jesus said 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'

HYMN CH4 694

Brother, Sister let me serve you

Offering

Dedication Prayer (A prayer by Rt Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2018-19)

As your Spirit weaves between, among and through Your world,
threading its way to reach and touch all,
remind us Lord Jesus, of your passion and compassion for the poor and sick,
for the stigmatised and alienated.
And let us be Your heart and hands, and your love.
Offering the hope and wholeness all need.

May our offering bring light into the dark spaces of others lives.
Amen.

Intercession Prayer (Add prayers for your own and current world situations and finish with the following.)

Hear our prayer, O God of light and love,
for all who live with HIV or AIDS.
Grant loving companions,

who will offer support in any difficult situations they may face;
that every day may be lived with courage and faith.
Bless us with an abundance of your love,
that we may live with concern for others.
Shine on us all the light that you alone can give.
Through Jesus, the light of the world.
Amen.

Worship Leader

A word of thanks goes to everyone who has taken part in today's service, and in Souper Sunday as a whole. A reminder to everyone that a lovely warming lunch of soup and bread awaits us. You are all welcome to join us for lunch in (LUNCH VENUE)

And now we close our time of worship by singing

HYMN CH4 710

I have a dream a man once said.

Benediction (A Gaelic blessing of unknown origin)

May the blessing of light be on us - light without and light within.
May the blessed sunlight shine on us like a great peat fire,
so that stranger and friend may come and warm themselves at it.
And may light shine out of our eyes,
like a candle set in the window of a house,
bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.
And may the Lord bless us. Amen.