



THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA (ACK)

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   The Anglican Church of Kenya

WORLD HIV AND AIDS DAY 2022

Today, as has been the global tradition for the past 34 years, we join the world in observing the **World AIDS Day**. This day is set aside for a time to reflect as we all join together in creating awareness on the status of HIV pandemic and promote efforts in Prevention, Treatment and Care for those living with the Virus, and those affected by it. Perhaps more significant, is to stand in solidarity with those affected. This year's theme is centered around **Equalizing**, focusing on equalizing access to rights, services, resources; and Science and medicine in relation to the management of the pandemic.

Over the years, science has helped us to understand how to better manage the Virus. While great strides have been made to that end, there is still room to do more.

The second Kenya AIDS Strategic Framework (KASF II), a 5 -Year policy framework guiding the Country's response to the pandemic, lists among others things, the following pathways to reducing the impact of HIV on communities by the year 2025:

- i. Reduce new HIV infections by 75%
- ii. Reduce AIDS-related mortality by 50%
- iii. Micro-eliminate viral hepatitis and reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted infections
- iv. Reduce HIV related stigma and discrimination to less than 25%
- v. Increase domestic financing of the HIV response to 50%

The Anglican Church of Kenya stands ready to play her role to help achieve these goals.

Across the Country, the church is actively engaged in providing support to those affected. In the Nyanza Region, where statistics still indicate a high prevalence of HIV within some counties, we are targeting People Living with HIV and AIDS in our livelihood support programs. In Mt. Kenya East Region, we are also providing Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) services to communities through our Health facilities; as well as using our clergy and other faith leaders to integrate messaging on HIV prevention and management during Church services.

In other areas such as the Central Rift and Nairobi, we are supporting the education needs of orphaned and vulnerable children; as well as walking with Children and teens living with HIV in promoting adherence to treatment and offering psychosocial support to those affected. Across the country we are also advocating for responsible and healthy living while working to reduce stigma and discrimination against those affected. We call upon all Kenyans particularly parents to engage the youth and young adults who are now leading in infections.

The above interventions may look humble in helping the country address the pandemic, but we believe these small steps can go a long way towards achieving the bigger goals. We propose that to help end new transmissions and improve access to treatment, there is need for partners and stakeholders to work towards bridging existing knowledge gaps in HIV management. Communities need to be sensitized on the importance of voluntary testing and counselling; and the usage of ARVs. There is also need for increased sensitization for caregivers to understand the nutrition status of children under their care, especially those infected. There is also need to increase support for strengthening Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) engaged in grass root HIV/ AIDs case management.

In promoting equity, we will help lessen the burden for those affected, while also creating a society that shows love to our brothers and sisters on whose lives, the impact of HIV and AIDs has been adversely immense. Today, we renew our commitment and pledge to be present, working with like-minded partners in creating a better world from HIV/AIDS infection. To all who are affected and those infected, we reiterate our commitment to supporting effective interventions, and offer our prayers and encouragement. We believe that, *"the Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them"* (Psalms 145:18-19).



The Most Rev. Dr Jackson Ole Sapit,

The Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya, Bishop of All Saints Cathedral and Bishop in ordinary of the Kenya Defence forces.