

The ELCA Strategy on HIV/AIDS



Recently named the “single greatest reversal in human development” in modern times, the HIV and AIDS crisis has already claimed more than 25 million lives.

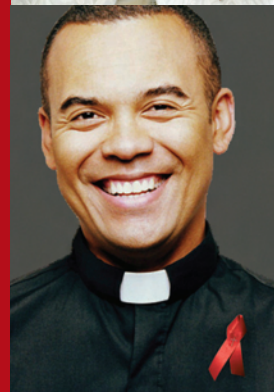
While tremendous advances have been made in response to AIDS over the past two decades, there is so much more to be done. In 2009, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS and called on the ELCA to respond faithfully and effectively to this pandemic.

Why the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS?

- Each day, more than 6,800 people become HIV-positive, and more than 5,700 people die from AIDS.
- There are 33.2 million people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide, 1.2 million in the United States alone.
- AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 12 million children under the age of 18 in sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to AIDS.
- In countries hardest hit by HIV, life expectancy has declined by 20 years, poverty has deepened, and economic growth has been reversed.

United Nations Development Programme as cited in the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS (p.2).
Joint United National Programme on HIV/AIDS and Kaiser Family Foundation as cited in the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS (p.2 and p.6).

The ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS affirms the claim made and shared by 349 member churches of the World Council of Churches: the body of Christ has AIDS. Those living with HIV and dying of AIDS include members of this church and brothers and sisters around the world. When one member of the body of Christ suffers, we all suffer.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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What are the goals of the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS?

The ELCA believes a world is possible where new cases of HIV are prevented and all individuals living with HIV or AIDS are able to live with dignity. The strategy names the following goals:

- Halt the spread of HIV through effective prevention, treatment, and care.
- Eliminate the stigma and discrimination experienced by those who are HIV-positive.
- Reduce the conditions of poverty and marginalization that contribute to the spread of HIV.

How will the ELCA accomplish these goals?

With over 4.7 million members and more than 10,400 congregations in the United States, in addition to the relationships with 68.3 million Lutherans worldwide, the ELCA is well-positioned to respond faithfully to those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

Specific actions include:

- Raising \$10 million dollars to fund the goals of the strategy.
- Equipping congregations with study materials, worship and devotional resources to engage in dialogue and theological reflection.
- Encouraging ELCA congregations, synods and church-related social ministry organizations to welcome, support, and advocate with individuals living with and affected by HIV and AIDS in their communities.
- Sharing resources with trusted global partners and companion churches that will enable them to expand their service to the most vulnerable through effective ministries of HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care, and advocacy.

“This churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy acknowledges that the reality of AIDS in the twenty-first century demands strong action. Indifference or a shallow response is not an option if the church is to be faithful to its calling.”

—ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS

Download the full strategy at www.elca.org/aids.



How can I help?

- **Donate.** Give today by visiting www.elca.org/aids, calling 800-638-3522, or mailing your gift to ELCA World Hunger, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694. Please note “HIV and AIDS” on the memo line of your check.
- **Advocate.** Ask your elected officials to support legislation that will halt the spread of HIV and AIDS, eliminate stigma and reduce conditions of poverty.
- **Learn.** Learn more about the HIV and AIDS crisis and invite your congregation to participate in educational activities.
- **Serve.** Invite your congregation to partner with an agency that is involved in HIV and AIDS work in your local community.
- **Pray.** Pray for those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS and for the ELCA, that it will respond faithfully to the challenge of HIV and AIDS.

Visit www.elca.org/aids for more information, resources and ways to get involved. Download the full strategy at www.elca.org/aids.

