

**Set Free Ministries through Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith Church, Inc.  
Flashlight of Hope, Inc.  
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**HIV/AIDS, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STD'S), TUBERCULOSIS (TB), AND SEXUAL  
MINORITY ISSUES (GLBTQ+ ISSUES) FAITH-BASED CALENDAR**

**COMPILED BY ELDER GEORGE N. GIBSON, B.A., C.D.A., SP. ED., CIRS  
PASTOR AND CHAPLAIN**

I have compiled a HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's), Tuberculosis (TB), and Sexual Minority Issues (Gay and Lesbian Issues) Calendar for the spiritual community. This is the first and only one of its kind. This calendar and information can serve as a model for the religious community to start or keep afloat AIDS Ministries, Health and Wellness Ministries, et cetera. There are very high ratings of the following in our community, across the nation, and worldwide: HIV/AIDS, STD's, TB, suicides among gay youths, gay bashings, homicides among transgender individuals, imprisonment and even death in some countries. The statistics can be broken down even further. HIV/AIDS is very high among minorities (blacks and Hispanics)! Again, women are one of the fastest growing populations to become infected! What's more, many people succumb to their injuries in gay bashings! Moreover, black transgender women have the highest rate of homicides than any other transgender racial group!

Many gay youths have a difficult time dealing with their sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, and bisexuality) and sexual identity and expression (transgender) during puberty. These feelings are compounded and confusing even more when they are trying to reconcile their sexuality with their spirituality. Many might experience the following: Loneliness, isolation, bullying, might fall into cigarette smoking, substance abuse (alcohol and drugs), homelessness, sex for survival, multiple sex partners, unprotected sex, inner homophobia, and even die by suicide because of low self-esteem and self-image. Many of these can lead to high ratings of HIV/AIDS, STD's and TB.

I included domestic violence on the calendar under the month of October. There is a relationship between domestic violence and HIV/AIDS, STD's, and TB. Rape, sexual abuse, and the attacker preventing the victim from accessing healthcare services are some examples of the relationship between the two.

Just like the *Parousia* and eschatology are imminent today, we should be blowing the trumpet and sounding the alarm in our houses of worship concerning these statistics! Joel 2:1 says, "Blow ye the trumpet [shophar or ram's horn] in Zion [Jerusalem], and sound an alarm in my holy mountain [Jerusalem]: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the

Lord cometh, for *it is nigh at hand.*” The *Parousia* is the theological term(inology) for the rapture or the Second Coming of Christ. Likewise, eschatology is the theological term for the apocalypse or the end of the world. Prophet Joel prophesied to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. Judah was the Southern Kingdom after the United Kingdom was divided.

My religion is Christianity, and the denomination is Apostolic. Apostolic is synonymous to a Holiness or Pentecostal church. I chose poems, songs, famous quotes, Sacred Scriptures (S.S.), and messages that are culturally sensitive to the spiritual community. In other words, I speak their language. The messages are universal and can be used for any religious faith. The literary and musical works, quotes, and scriptures can be used for specific occasions, such as candlelight vigils, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, graduations, and straight & gay weddings. In addition, houses of worship might want to implement some of these works into the following: Worship services, programs, candlelight vigils, health fairs, counseling and testing, and other activities to make their houses of worship a more inclusive environment.

It is our duty to have compassion, destigmatize HIV/AIDS and the gay community, be more inclusive, and not condemn people. I mentioned the latter specifically because of legalism. Saint Matthew 23:13, 15 says, “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more *the* child of hell than yourselves.” The houses of worship might want to do the following but not limited to:

1. Sermon/Homily/*Khutba* (Islam)/Message

Having Compassion & Destigmatizing HIV/AIDS, Being More Inclusive to Everybody, Including the GLBTQ+ Community, and Not Condemning People

2. Scripture Readings on Healings, Miracles, and Inclusion

3. Special Prayers on Healing, Miracles, and Inclusion

4. Prayer Line using Holy Oil

5. Poems

6. Solos

7. Candlelight Vigils for People who Died from AIDS, Suicides among Gay Youths, Gay Bashings, and Homicides among Transgender People

8. A. Statistics on HIV/AIDS, STD’s, TB, Suicides among Gay Youths, Gay Bashings, and Homicides among Transgender People

B. Homosexuality is Illegal in Some Countries. People Can be Harassed, Tortured, Imprisoned, And Even Face the Death Penalty.

9. Red Ribbons and Gay Identifying Symbols (*Bawabu*, Rainbow Flag, Lambda, Pink Triangle, Black Triangle, Etc.) at the Entrance of the Building, Clothing, Printed Bulletins, Etc. The *bawabu* symbol and KuchuQwanzaa are for (black) same gender loving (SGL) men and women.

10. Health and Resource Fair with Various Types of Screenings (HIV/AIDS, STD's, TB, CoViD-19, hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol, height and weight, eyes and ears examinations, etc.)\*

\* Although the emphasis of this calendar is on religion, HIV/AIDS, STD's, TB, and GLBTQ+ issues, other topics can be addressed, such as the following but limited to:

- |                    |                 |                        |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Nutrition       | 4. Education    | 7. Housing             |
| 2. Substance Abuse | 5. Employment   | 8. Bereavement Support |
| 3. Mental Health   | 6. Ex-Offenders |                        |

Some of these topics on health and human services have a great impact on the lives of low income individuals and families.

At the present time, there are only two faith-based awarenesses concerning HIV/AIDS and one concerning GLBTQ+ issues. The Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS and National Faith AIDS Day are the two that bridge religion and HIV/AIDS together. Queer Youth of Faith Day is the only day that brings spirituality and sexual minority issues together. However, there are many health awarenesses, racial/cultural months, and other awarenesses where HIV/AIDS, STD's, TB, and GLBTQ+ issues can be included.

The Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS is the first week of March every year. It started as The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS because of the high ratings of HIV/AIDS in the black community. The name was changed over time to include non-blacks and other religious faiths. The Balm in Gilead started the entire movement. Its official website is [www.balmingilead.org](http://www.balmingilead.org). The nonprofit organization got its name from Jeremiah 8:22. It says, "*Is there* no balm in Gilead; *is there* no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered [restored]?" Also, the Negro spiritual entitled "There Is a Balm in Gilead" is based off of this Sacred Scripture (S.S.) too. A balm is a healing ointment or something to soothe a person. It appears that Gilead was well-known for this according to Genesis 37:25. I can answer the questions in Jeremiah 8:22. THERE IS a balm in Gilead!

National Faith AIDS Day is the last Sunday in August each year. It was started by a Muslimah (female Muslim) who is also the founder of Have Rahma. Rahma in Arabic means to have compassion or mercy. The official website for National Faith AIDS Day is [www.FaithAIDSDay.com](http://www.FaithAIDSDay.com).

Queer Youth of Faith Day is June 30th of each year. This is the last day of Gay Pride Month. The day was started by Beloved Arise. The nonprofit organization got its name from Song of Solomon 2:10. It says, "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Its official website is [www.belovedarise.org](http://www.belovedarise.org).

Religion has always played a vital role in the African-American community. The black church, Negro spirituals and gospel music have a big impact on the lives of black people. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Observance is always on the third Monday in January. Again, Black History Month is in February. National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is on February 7th. There can be programs, activities, health screenings, et cetera. The one day can be expanded to two months since we are dealing with black people in January and February.

The faith community does not consists of just spiritual leaders but AIDS Ministries, Health and Wellness Ministries, and lay members as well. The latter has a lot that they can bring to the table. Again, some lay members are movers and shakers! No one should be excluded! Everybody has ideas to contribute!

People who hold leadership roles in the spiritual community are the following but not limited to:

1. Clergy  
(Pastor/Rector, Minister, The Pope, Priest, Monk, Rabbi, Imam, Guru, Etc.)
2. Chaplain
3. Overseer
4. Prophet/Prophetess  
(Seer/Seeress)
5. Deacon/Deaconess
6. Trustee Board
7. Church Mothers/The Mothers' Board
8. Missionary
9. Nun
10. Theologian

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**THIS IS NOT CONSIDERED A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF AWARENESES. THESE ARE JUST SOME  
TO GET PEOPLE STARTED. MORE DATES WILL BE ADDED IN THE FUTURE.**

**JANUARY**

3RD Monday Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Observance

**FEBRUARY**

7TH National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

14TH Saint Valentine's Day  
National Condom Day

Black History Month

**MARCH**

1ST Week Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS

10TH Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

24TH World Tuberculosis (TB) Day

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) Awareness Month

Women's History Month

**JUNE**

27TH National HIV Testing Day

30TH Queer Youth of Faith Day

Gay Pride Month

**AUGUST**

Last Sunday National Faith AIDS Day

31ST International Overdose Awareness Day

Make a Will Month

**SEPTEMBER**

15TH -- October 15TH Hispanic Heritage Month

27TH Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

**OCTOBER**

September 15TH -- October 15TH Hispanic Heritage Month

15TH Hispanic HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

3RD Week Estate Planning Awareness Week

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Estate Planning Month

Gay and Lesbian History Month

**DECEMBER**

1ST World AIDS Day

Updated On: January 4, 2023