

Today's Advent Devotional is provided by Rev. Elder Dwayne Johnson

Vigilant Hope

Welcome to the first of our Advent Devotionals for 2019. Our theme is "Repeat the Sounding Joy." It is also the theme for our Sunday Worship Services and the theme for our Worship Arts Ministry Christmas Presentation at 6 PM on December 7. Thanks to Rev. Dr. Robin Gorsline for coordinating and editing this series. And thanks in advance to the many voices of MCCDC for their writing contributions. There are still some open slots and we would love to receive your submissions. Just reach out to Dr. Robin: writer@robinhawleygorsline.com

Today is both the First Sunday of Advent and World AIDS Day. Both observances are a call to vigilance. Like those of the early church expecting Jesus to return at any minute, we heed the invitation of Matthew 24:42, 44: "Therefore be vigilant! For you don't know the day your Savior is coming . . . be prepared . . . The Promised one is coming at the time you least expect."



The call to MCCDC this Advent is for us to dare to believe that our work for wholeness has value beyond numerical metrics. Only God knows the impact of our thoughts, prayers and actions. The smallest act of love in any community has a global ripple.

The 2019 theme for World AIDS Day is "Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community." It is an extraordinary theme. It may seem unrealistic. The call to MCCDC is to dare to believe the epidemic will be ended through vigilant hope and global partnerships. There are fewer new infections and fewer people are dying. Medical advances offer continuing hope. Yet it is vital to acknowledge that there are impoverished regions of our world where there is little to no access to treatments. The science and technology continues to develop. The question is whether or not we will have the compassion and will to ensure that access is extended to even the most impoverished regions.

While waiting on science and technology, we can end the epidemic of limited access now. Through spiritual will, courage, and education each one of us is called to be a voice for health and wholeness in every conversation. We can extend the MCC value of wholeness community by community, into our neighborhoods and workplaces in the DMV and around the globe.

We are called to vigilant hope. We are called to undertake great ventures for God. What might we dare?