Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ

World AIDS Day service
December 1, 2021

Greetings
Rev. Darrell Goodwin
Executive Conference Minister
Southern New England Conference

Today, we light candles to bring continued illumination into this world, wisdom to our leaders, healing to our communities, passion into our hearts.

Psalm 42:1-8
Rev. Dr. Deborah Rundlett
Pastor
The Meetinghouse, Ridgefield, CT

Candle Lighting

We light the first candle to remember that the Holy One, Compassionate One, Spirit of the Living God, Arms of the Goddess, Divine Source of all that is, burns brightly with us this night and all the days to come.

“Balm in Gilead”
Rev. Mia Douglas
Founder and Principal
DCG Wellness Coaching and Soul Care

Matthew 25:31-40
Rev. Roberto Ochoa
Associate for Congregations of Color
UCC National Justice and Local Church Ministries

Candle Lighting

As we light this candle for our world, we remember that we are all connected, that borders cannot be seen from the heavens but have been put there by us. We
remember the millions around the world who don’t have the access to the many blessings of healthcare and medications that we have here. May this light illuminate the world, showing us all that we are connected.

“The Many

“Rise Up”

“When My Brother Fell (For Joseph Beam)”
by Essex Hemphill

Candle Lighting

Lighting our next candle, we pray that elected officials, faith leaders, and all those in positions of authority around the world, in our country, state, county, city and faith communities will continue to make decisions filled with the wisdom of the ages. May they not make decisions about people’s bodies, lives, actions, and sexualities from fear, but from knowledge, facts, and the Wisdom of the Spirit, ensuring that all have access to needed healing treatments and that all are free from barriers to that which we need to heal.

The Many

“These Bodies”

“Won’t You Celebrate With Me?”
by Lucille Clifton

Candle Lighting

This candle is for our community, one that burns brightly for healing...and most importantly for healing from our sadness and grief. May it light the way for us to actually celebrate our lives today, always keeping within us the memory of those who are not with us this day, and to remember to live and to live fully. To empower one another to make life affirming choices. To light the way out of our closets and into our homes. To remember that healing is needed not just around our own bodies, but around the bodies and lives of others...healing the racism and classism that still separates us; healing the oppressions that suffocate us; and healing from our fears of the “other.”
Revelation 21:1-5

Katharine Howe
SNEC Board of Directors
Woodridge Congregational Church, Cranston, RI

Candle Lighting

And lastly, we light this candle to reignite the passion within our hearts. May this light bring us into a new day living with HIV/AIDS...igniting a passion for truth and facts; a passion for embracing one another no matter our “status;” igniting our passion for living this day in all our fullness...as individuals and as community.

Blessings to us all as we bring our light into this sacred space today.

“Total Praise”

Liberty Christian Center, Hartford, CT

About today’s Service

Learn about Lucille Clifton at poets.org/poet/lucille-clifton

Learn about Joseph Beam at beenhere.org/2017/12/30/joseph-beam/

Learn about The Many at themanyarehere.com

Candle Lighting liturgy adapted from mccchurch.org/world-aids-day