

Sunday of HOPE

Helpful Suggestions

Appropriate Hymns

- My Hope is Built
- Hymn of Promise
- Hope of the World
- We Shall Overcome
- Great is Thy Faithfulness
- Soon and Very Soon
- Amazing Grace

Appropriate Scripture

- Romans 5:3-5
- Acts 2:25-27
- Romans 15:12-13
- 2 Corinthians 1:7-10

Prayers for the Conquest of Cancer

Almighty and Loving God, we remember that Your will for each of us is health and peace, fullness of each life and wholeness of each life. We know that illness of every sort challenges Your plan and, therefore, must challenge us.

We thank You for those in sickness who rise to the challenge by bravely fighting on, and who continues to live and grow and love and serve in spite of the pain and suffering.

We thank You for all who minister to cancer patients; for those who are instruments of Your healing grace – the doctors, nurses, technicians, those involved in research and experimentation, and rabbis, priests, pastors, family and friends who are there with those who suffer - all channels of Your healing love.

Finally, we thank You for institutions and organizations that provide care - whose purpose is to challenge all that "corrupts and destroys the creatures of God."

We thank You for the great work of the American Cancer Society, and we ask Your special blessings, Dear God, on its healing work. Guide and empower our leaders, strengthen and give good success to its workers and volunteers, and grant that all may know that it is Your healing work that they do; and that one day You "will wipe away every tear from our eyes and that there will be no more pain, for the former things will have passed away."

This prayer, O God, we ask in Your powerful name of Love.



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HOPE

Church Candle Ceremony

You will need:

- **3 Candles** (consider using 2 white and 1 purple, but you can use any color you choose)
- **A lighter**
- **3 people** to light the candles
- **Something written** (see below for sample)

At some point during the regular service you should have a “special offering” along with a song or special music. Coordinate this with your pastor.

Sample script

To hear the words “You have cancer” is almost deafening. At first there is a shock, then there is survival. Your life instantly changes from the typical day to day life you know, to an ever changing schedule of doctor appointments, medicines, treatments, and surgeries. This is the life of a cancer patient.

“You are in remission” are the words a cancer survivor longs to hear. As a survivor, you ask yourself, “how long will this last? How long until it comes back?” We have seen the survival rate climb year after year and with that our HOPE for a cure grows.

“I am sorry, there is nothing more we can do.” is a statement no one wants to hear. After struggling and fighting, some battles are lost. Through these battles, advances are made and memories live on.

It is in honor and memory that these torches are lit. For those fighting this terrible disease we embrace you (light a white candle), for those who have fought and won we honor you (light a white candle), and for those we have lost we remember you (light the purple candle; it should be in the middle)

Sunday of HOPE Program Guide

The American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life is a celebration of HOPE, giving communities the opportunity to celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease. An important part of relay is the opportunity to remember those touched by cancer.

The night is brightened by the glow of illuminated bags called luminaria, each bearing the name of someone who has battled cancer. Some celebrate cancer survivors, while others help us honor and remember those gone too soon. All represent someone special who has been profoundly affected by cancer and the family and friends who continue to fight back in their honor.

What is a luminaria?

Luminaria are candles lit inside bags filled with sand, each one bearing the name of a person touched by cancer.

What is Sunday of HOPE?

Church members are given the opportunity to provide a luminaria in Memory or In Honor of a special loved one in exchange for a donation to the American Cancer Society.

- Suggested donation: \$10 luminaria bag
- The luminaria are used to decorate the church for the Sunday of HOPE
- Ideally, the theme of the service is HOPE

How is the Sunday of HOPE organized?

- The Relay for Life Sunday of HOPE is arranged and coordinated by a church member.
- This person is responsible for promoting the event through church bulletins or newsletters, collecting the “orders”, creating the bags, and collecting the donations.
- On the morning of Sunday for HOPE, the church is decorated with the luminaria.
- The service is planned with HOPE as the theme, including sermon, scripture, prayer, music, with the luminaria as a reminder.
- A cancer educational message may be included in the church bulletin along with the names of the donor’s and those represented through the luminaria.

Sample Newsletter or Bulletin Announcement

On Sunday XX/XX/XXXX we will be celebrating a “Sunday of HOPE” as part of the American Cancer Society’s annual Relay For Life. Relay For Life is a celebration of HOPE in the fight against cancer. As part of our Sunday of HOPE, we will be including luminaria, candle lit inside bags filled with sand, each one bearing the name of a person touched by cancer. We are giving you the opportunity to order a Luminaria “In Honor Of” or “In Memory Of” a loved one. These Luminaria will be used to decorate our sanctuary for this special service. Please fill out this form and return along with your donation. (Checks made payable to the American Cancer Society) by Sunday, XX/XX,XXXX.