

Lutheran bishops seek to promote AIDS awareness: Leaders undergo HIV testing

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Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have joined African religious leaders in publicly undergoing testing to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and to end a legacy of church stigma and silence on the subject. "We in the U.S. tend to think of this as a global pandemic unrelated to people in the United States," Mark Hanson, presiding bishop of the ELCA, said March 5 at the church's Chicago headquarters. "For me as a married heterosexual man to be tested is a reminder that all communities are affected, if not infected."

The three-minute tests, conducted while the 67-member ELCA Conference of Bishops met March 5-10, are part of efforts to encourage ELCA members and other Lutherans in the United States and elsewhere to be tested and to know their HIV status.