

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19th Annual International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Vigil

(May 2, 2002) – On May 19, 2002, thousands of individuals in over 500 communities in 75 countries will participate in the world’s largest and oldest annual grassroots HIV/AIDS event, the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Vigil.

In Las Vegas the candlelight memorial will be held at the Christ Episcopal Church, 2100 S. Maryland Parkway, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. The vigil is designed to honor the memory of those lost to HIV/AIDS, show support for those living with HIV/AIDS, raise awareness and mobilize the community in the fight against the disease.

This year’s theme, “Share Your Vision For a Brighter Tomorrow,” was created to embrace the many facets of the pandemic and invite people around the world to reflect on how these facets might change in the future to create a healthier world.

“Currently in Clark County there are more than 3700 known cases of AIDS, and of that number over 1,800 have died,” said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer for the Clark County Health District.

“The memorial vigil is an opportunity for us to recognize the toll this disease has taken at both the community and global level”

The original memorial was held in 1983, when the cause of AIDS was unknown and no more than a few thousand AIDS deaths had been recorded. Since 1983 more than 16 million people have lost their lives world wide and 34 million are currently living with HIV and AIDS.

According to Rick Reich, AIDS service coordinator for the health district, “The vigil is a time for us to dedicate ourselves – for the first time or once again – to the fight against HIV. We will remain committed to the cause until we find a way to stop the spread of the disease.”

(more)

Events planned for the local observance include presentations from clergy and choirs representing a variety of denominations in the community, testimonies from those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, a call-to-action for the community, proclamations, poetry and a candlelight reading of the names of those that have lost their lives battling AIDS.

For more information about the local event, contact the Office of AIDS at 942-9278

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