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4300 Marsh Ridge Road • Suite 114 • Carrollton, TX 75010
972.267.1111 • 972.267.3535 (fax) • www.alarryross.com

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Kristin Cole 615.289.6701
kristin@alarryross.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICK AND KAY WARREN HOST WORLD AIDS DAY EVENTS AT SADDLEBACK CHURCH:

Dec. 1 Activities Provide Hope, Encouragement for the Church Involved in the Worldwide Fight Against HIV/AIDS

LAKE FOREST, Calif., Dec. 1, 2009 – Saddleback Church in Southern California will host a variety of activities today in honor of the 21st World AIDS Day, including live online chats, free HIV testing and “An Evening of Hope” with Pastor Rick and Kay Warren.

“HIV/AIDS is still the greatest humanitarian crisis of all time, killing millions every year and leaving millions of orphaned and vulnerable children behind,” said Kay Warren. “In the middle of this tragedy, Christians have the opportunity to make the love of our Savior real to anyone infected or affected by HIV and AIDS.”

Founder Kay Warren and Executive Director Elizabeth Styffe, of the Saddleback Church HIV/AIDS Initiative, will host several 30-minute, live chats beginning at 10 a.m. PT on www.HIVandthechurch.com. The first will be a special interactive discussion for pastors’ wives followed by an 11 a.m. PT national conversation regarding orphan care and a noon PT dialogue on the topic of World AIDS Day.

Recognizing that the simplest way to fight HIV/AIDS is to know one’s HIV status, the church will provide free, confidential HIV testing throughout the day at the Refinery building at its Lake Forest campus.. In previous years, Rick and Kay Warren and several Saddleback Church AIDS Conference program participants – including then-Senator Barack Obama – have been publicly tested in an effort to demonstrate the simplicity of the procedure and remove the stigma. It is estimated that in the U.S. there are 300,000 to 400,000 people who are unaware they are HIV positive.

The culmination of the World AIDS Day activities will be “An Evening of Hope,” held at 7 p.m. PT in the Refinery. This will be a time to remember individuals who have died from HIV/AIDS, pray for those currently living with the disease and celebrate the hope of breakthroughs in a possible vaccine. In addition to a message from the Warrens, Lisa Beyer from the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative will be the featured guest speaker.

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“As we have seen through our work around the world, because the Church has the largest distribution network, we believe it has the opportunity to not only slow the spread of HIV/AIDS, but to stop it,” Rick Warren said. “HIV/AIDS has been a stigma in the Church for too long. Our goal is to encourage others to show the love of Christ by caring for those infected and affected by this pandemic.”

In addition to remembering the fight against HIV/AIDS today, Saddleback Church is also encouraging people to get involved in other ways throughout the year. The church is offering opportunities to care for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS by participating in a local service project or an international mission trip as part of the PEACE Plan, an effort to mobilize millions of Christians to **P**romote reconciliation, **E**quip servant leaders, **A**ssist the poor, **C**are for the sick and **E**ducate the next generation. For additional information about opportunities, visit www.HIVandtheChurch.com.

Another opportunity will take place February 9-12 during the Saddleback Church Radicalis Conference, which will include a special HIV/AIDS and orphan care track. The Radicalis Conference is a unique hands-on, comprehensive experience for church leadership teams. Combining more than 10 unique foci in one will help build and inspire church teams to serve God in their community and around the world. For more information, visit www.Radicalis.com.

Saddleback Church has been encouraging the involvement of the church against HIV/AIDS since 2004, when it formed the HIV/AIDS Initiative at Saddleback Church. In 2005, the church held its first Global Summit on AIDS and The Church centered around World AIDS Day. The event drew thousands of participants and featured global keynote speakers and informative sessions led by experts representatives from business; government; medicine; and non-profit and ministry organizations who are working locally and globally in an attempt to end AIDS. The strategically and historically unique Summit, also held surrounding the World AIDS Day in 2006 and 2007, was built entirely around a practical “local church-based” strategy designed to mobilize millions of congregations around the world for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

In lieu of the Summit last year, the Warrens held the Saddleback Civil Forum on Global Health on Dec. 1, to present President George W. Bush with the first “International Medal of PEACE” from the Global PEACE Coalition in recognition of his unprecedented contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

Saddleback Church, founded by the Warrens in 1980, is located in Lake Forest, Calif. With an average weekly attendance of 22,000, it is one of the five largest churches in America. For additional information about the Saddleback HIV/AIDS Initiatives, visit www.HIVandTheChurch.com or www.RwandaHealthcare.com.

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Note to Editors: For more information about Pastor Rick and Kay Warren, please visit www.RickWarrenNews.com or www.KayWarrenNews.com.