

A Stage IV Prostate Cancer Diary

Bishop Stacey Latimer, 63, was diagnosed with metastatic prostate cancer in 2019. He enrolled in a clinical trial and is still going strong.

March 9, 2026 As Told to [Bob Barnett](#)

Growing up in rural Laurens, South Carolina, I loved church. But I knew I was different, attracted to boys. In college, I tried to commit suicide. In 1985, I joined the Army and tried not to be gay. But I also felt liberated when I met other men trying to understand their sexuality. In 1987, I tested positive for HIV. I've been on antiretroviral treatment since the mid-'90s and never developed AIDS.

At first, I thought I was going to die. I had one of my talks with God and said, "If You get me through this, I want to be part of helping." I worked on HIV outreach. I moved to Brooklyn and in 2005 became a minister with the gay-affirming Unity Fellowship Church. In 2009, I founded the Love Alive International Sanctuary of Praise in Manhattan, a ministry that welcomes everyone. I became an auxiliary bishop in 2019 and will be an ordinary bishop in 2026. I continue to share my HIV story, including in [POZ magazine](#) [Cancer Health's sister publication].

2015–2016

I started having urinary problems. My doctor thought it was an enlarged prostate and put me on medicine. But I think the cancer may have been happening.

Summer 2017

I started having this feeling like someone was running fingers alongside my back. I went to the doctor about it. They took X-rays, couldn't find anything.

February 2019

Every now and then, I had this feeling like something was pulling, expanding and contracting in my back. My doctor said we needed to do an MRI. Well, I had had a bad experience with an MRI in the past. I had convulsions due to an allergy to the dye. I went in for the MRI, but there was a delay, and the fear kicked in. I told them to reschedule. In the meantime, they sent me to a urologist.

March 2019

I was with my urologist for less than 10 minutes when he said, "I think this is cancer." He referred me to an oncologist at the Brooklyn VA Medical Center. First, though, I went to Walter Reed [National Military Medical Center] for a second opinion. They thought it was cancer too.

So I went to the VA in Brooklyn. They did the MRI. They told me, "Mr. Latimer, it's everywhere—in your bones. You have 11 tumors. Stage IV." But they also said, "It's not in any of your organs, and we're going to try to keep it that way."

I went home, looking on the internet to find hope, but I couldn't find anybody with Stage IV living past five years. It was the second time I was facing death. In 1987, I was told I'd have six months to live with HIV. But God has been gracious.

I had just put a down payment on a dog: a cane corso, an Italian mastiff. I told my doctor I didn't want to get the dog and have him end up an orphan. He said, "Get your dog—my patients do better when they have pets." It's been the best thing.

Even though my cancer was progressive, my doctor wanted to take it a day at a time. I trusted my doctor. He was a man of faith as well. We didn't start treatment for more than a year.

May 2019

They radiated my chest. It wasn't about the cancer. They told me that I would start on hormone therapy, and I could develop breasts, and this makes sure that doesn't happen. The first day was OK, but by the third, I couldn't even swallow my own spit. I can't even imagine how people do radiation and chemo at the same time.

June 2019

There was one area on my spine they were concerned about, so they did some radiation on it too.

August 2019

My oncologist told me I should be in pain and that they have lots of ways to help. I said I wasn't in pain, just very uncomfortable, sometimes trouble bending down and then getting back up. But I know I have God living in me. I can do this.

July 2020

They were doing regular blood monitoring, including PSA [prostate-specific antigen] levels, and finally my oncologist said, "It's time that we begin treatment." I started on hormone therapy first.

August 2020

We started chemotherapy—intravenously every three weeks. I had nausea, throwing up, fatigue. It messed with my hearing—I wear hearing aids now. Thank goodness for my dog. Without him, I wouldn't have done the walking that I did—and do. I did this for nearly two years, plus I stayed on hormone therapy and had intravenous medicine to strengthen my bones. It was a struggle. But it brought an awareness to me: I ain't ready to die.

February 2022

The chemo stopped working. My PSA numbers went up. They started me on a different chemo, a pill, but I just didn't feel like myself. I told them, "I'm not going to take it anymore." My doctor said, "We have nothing else for you, but I'll start looking." Seeing this as a possible end, I decided to marry my best friend, who had moved in with me when I started chemo. He's been wonderful, along with my bishop, who encouraged me not to give up.

January 2024

We got married down at City Hall. My doctor told me about a clinical trial at New York University Langone Health's Perlmutter Cancer Center. It was for a targeted radiopharmaceutical

treatment—a drug and radiation—which has since been approved. But then another trial combined it with an investigational drug, ONC-392, a checkpoint inhibitor that binds to a protein on immune cells inside the tumor. I said, “I want to try that trial.”

February 2024

We started the combo. By then, my PSA was 95. Two weeks later, my numbers started going down. I was supposed to do 13 of these combination sessions over the course of a year. Sometimes, I would take them together, then at different times, then together again.

November 2024

After the first six sessions, my hemoglobin levels started to go down. We stopped after the 11th session. My doctor told me that we needed to preserve my bone marrow, so we skipped the last two doses of the radiation drug but kept on with the experimental drug. It’s been pretty easy. I had side effects the morning after I first took both drugs together but very little after that.

March 2025

I finished treatment. My doctors said, “Mr. Latimer, it’s just amazing. Even though you stopped [one of the meds], your numbers are still going down.” I started going in every 12 weeks for blood work and bone scans for research purposes.

January 2026

My PSA numbers keep going down. It's now 0.24. They were amazed that the treatment didn't destroy my T cells. That clinical trial was my miracle that I prayed for.

I believe that my life is unfolding as it's supposed to. My mission is not done. Part of that mission is to inform people about cancer. You know, cancer is prevalent in the HIV community.

Do I have issues? Let me tell you: Today, at some point, there's going to be a twitch, an ache or a shooting pain to remind me where I am with this disease. But I'm OK. God has given me enough time. Life ain't gonna last forever. So you might as well get ready. Stop procrastinating. Enjoy life.

Editor's note: In an earlier version, we misidentified the location of the clinical trial. As the article now correctly states, Latimer began the trial in 2024 at NYU Langone Health's Perlmutter Cancer Center.

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