

## PRAYERS FOR UKRAINE AND OTHERS DURING TIMES OF WAR - 2022

**A PRAYER FOR UKRAINE** from Rev. Beth Richardson, Dean Emeritus of The Upper Room Chapel

God makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. ...  
God breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
God burns the shields with fire.  
God says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalm 46:9-10 (NRSV)

### CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIVE PRAYER

God of peace,  
Two nations are at war, Russia and Ukraine.  
It continues and today hundreds, both military and civilians  
have experienced physical, emotional and spiritual wounds.

*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.*

God of wisdom,  
Rain down your Spirit onto the leaders of the world  
That they might find a way where there is no way.

*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.*

God of comfort,  
Wrap the grieving ones in your cloak of consolation.

*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.*

God of courage,  
Be present and deliver with all those who are in harm's way.

*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Amen.*

### PRAYER - O GOD OF PEACE... by Kayla Craig

O God of peace, our hearts are heavy  
And our brains can barely keep up with the breaking news.  
We don't know what to say or what to do in a world so wounded.  
So we come to you with hearts heavy for  
All who sit in the crossfires of violence and acts of war.

O God of peace, be with the people of Ukraine.  
With the mothers who carry babies to subway shelters.  
With the fathers who hold their heads in their hands.  
With the children who absorb the traumas.  
Of violent acts of powerful men.

O God of peace, we don't know the words to pray  
For a warring world and all who are vulnerable in it.  
We don't pretend to know the extent of the damages  
Or what tomorrow (or today) will bring.  
But we know that you are a God of peace  
And we can't bomb our way to shalom.

O God of peace, comfort the crying and heal the hurt.  
Tend the aching and soothe the fearful.  
Make us instruments of your peace  
Creating a sacred symphony where  
Rhythms of grace are danced upon  
And evil has lost its sting, now and forevermore.  
O God of peace, hear our prayer.

### **A PRAYER FOR UKRAINE**

by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Faith Vigil for Peace in Ukraine, ELCA

O Lord, God of life, as you care for all creation, give us your peace.  
May our security come not from weapons, but from respect.  
May our strength come not from violence, but from love.  
May our own wealth come not from money, but from sharing.

May our path be not one of ambition, but of justice.  
May our victory not be one of revenge, but of forgiveness.  
Unarmed and confident, help us to defend the dignity of all creation.  
Sharing today and always the bread of solidarity and peace. Amen.

### **PRAYERS** - Unnited Church of Christ

<https://www.ucc.org/ucc-officers-share-prayer-for-ukraine/>

Holy God,  
Hear our prayers for all those who will die today because of war in Ukraine and other war-torn countries all over this world.  
Grant them an end to the suffering of this world and eternal peace that is only found in You.

We pray for the people of Ukraine, Russia, and all nations — that war and bloodshed can be avoided and a new, just peace can be forged out of this crisis.  
We ask that You grant wisdom to the leaders of nations, calling them to end provocation on all sides and invest instead in “the things that make for peace” as called

for in all our faith traditions (Luke 19:41-2).

We pray for an end to the deep insecurity and mistrust on all sides, and call on leaders to build trust, based not on military might or alliances, but on the basis of our shared future and common humanity. Now is a time in which past harm should be acknowledged and addressed, and new partnerships can be envisioned.

We pray for and call on our leaders to have the courage to take small, verifiable, and independent steps toward peace, inviting others to reciprocate. Now is time to invest in conflict resolution, diplomacy, and international cooperation — not more weapons which only escalate tension in the region.

Be with those suffering in ways that we cannot.

Protect them from devastation in ways those positioned in authority will not. Shield and comfort them as they confront the terror of violence that surrounds them. Hold them close to your heart and stay the hand of the enemies against them. Give us the courage and the strength to cry aloud against wickedness in high places that dare to harm others made in your image.

Comfort the children and heed their cries to be saved from harm in this world.

Make us a people who love our children, all of our children, more than we love greed, power, and control. Overturn governments of tyranny wherever they are found. Disrupt the intentions of evil and give us power to stand against demonic forces of greed and control. Grant that peace and justice come to warring nations by the hands of those courageous enough to stand and study war no more. Let Thy kin-dom come on earth as it is in heaven, we pray.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **A LAMENT FOR UKRAINE** by Melanie Simmons

Almighty God, our God, Prince of Peace,  
why do you allow war?  
Our sensibilities are shattered as a people living in peace are disrupted;  
as despot invade their way of life.  
Like stampeding buffaloes, tanks roll in a path of destruction;  
roads are paved with destroyed vehicles and ruin.  
Bombs fly like diving birds of prey, destroying homes;  
rubble is strewn across the city.  
Striking like lightning, drones shoot missiles into communities;  
children cry out in fright as their homes are destroyed – who shall comfort them?  
Streams of refugees flee on broken roads;  
where are the hungry to find food, or the sick to find care?  
Places of healing and new life have become areas of death;  
the blood of pregnant women and newborns mingles with the dust sifting down upon them.

The elite perpetrators laugh at the distress, like hyenas happy to feed upon their prey.  
How long must the innocent be rent by the claws and teeth of those self-centered animals?

Are you not called the Prince of Peace?

Where are your people to find you in the midst of this?

We cannot hit "Undo" on what has been done, and our pain and anger blind us to any response beyond what we see directly in front of us.

Where are you, to show us a different response than lashing out in retaliative strikes?

Where are you, to teach the greedy how to share instead of take?

Where are you, to heal the broken in body, mind, and soul?

Where is your saving grace as lives are shredded, with pieces strewn about like confetti?

Stop this war! Stop the fighting, the destruction, the killing!

Turn the drones around, eliminate them from the sky!

Demolish the tanks, drive them back to the country from whence they came!

Beat the weapons of war into tools of restoration and renewal.

Break the hardened hearts of the greedy, those stretching to take what is not theirs:

teach them with first-hand experience why their attacks are wrong;

let them understand personally why destroying homes and families is an atrocity to be prevented rather than pursued!

Cause the soldiers to repent of what they do to their neighbors;

make them understand the truth of the unjustified terror they strew!

Let them turn back to their own country, bearing the truth to its citizens so that all may know the evil their leader sows.

Change the leadership! Overturn the heart of the despot or remove him;

remove evil from power, that the needs of people may be met instead of selfish wants!

Curse the greed, the hunger for power, the ambition that has cursed your people!

Let there be peace again, cooperation instead of the tearing apart of neighboring states.

Bring your love to bear, to drive out hate and to heal the wounds of war.

How can people live in harmony again if it takes love to drive out hate, but we are blinded with overwhelming anguish to only see the hate?

How can we talk about heavenly justice when confronted with complete injustice?

How can we talk about a loving God who allows unprovoked pain and suffering?

How can we profess the hesed of our God, let alone convince others that you love all people, when war rends families and communities apart?

Shall more profess atheism, saying, "There is no God," because you do not protect the innocent from annihilation?

How can our faith reconcile your steadfast promise of love and peace with the terror and agony filling our senses?

Yet we know that you have blessed your people, providing grace for those who cry out to you.

The Israelites were redeemed multiple times, repeatedly brought back to the promised land and restored after so many of their children had been systematically murdered.

Your fledgling church survived great persecution to grow into a world power.

When your Church became too corrupt, you provided saints to redirect the faith.  
Despite misuse of your name to justify genocide, your Word traveled to the ends of the earth.

When the war to end all wars ended, the world recovered.

The war after that ended with nuclear threat, and you enabled political balance to prevent world annihilation with atomic bombs.

With each devastation, you change the old into a new thing;  
from a remnant, you create a great nation.

Surely the One who conquered all sin can overcome this intense barrage of it;  
the Good Shepherd will carry his wounded sheep to a place of safety and relief.

I will trust in my Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

I will proclaim your glory before all the people, praising your power and chasing your wisdom.

I will walk in the ways of the Lord, that the love of our God may shine through my actions as a beacon of hope in this time of darkness.

### **PRAYER BY BISHOP EDUARD KHEGAY, Eurasia/Central Asia**

Lord we know that it shouldn't be.

People should not bear death.

People should not be killed.

People should not lose their loved ones on the battlefields.

Cities and villages should not be turned into a war zone,

children should not be victims,

and war should not be a means to achieve peace.

Lord, we need a new heaven and a new earth.

We remember the world that You gave us,

and mourn that we have lost it.

We all want to be safe.

But our security is not in force.

Spare us the ravages of war.

Teach us the ways of peace.

### **A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN**

Ina J. Hughes, for the Children's Defense Fund.

Our Gracious Lord,

We pray for children who put chocolate fingers everywhere, who like to be tickled, who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants, who sneak popsicles before supper, who erase holds in math workbooks, who never can find their shoes....

And we pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers, who never "counted potatoes," who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead, who never go to the circus, who live in

an X-rated world.

We pray for children who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish, who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money, who cover themselves with Band-Aids and sing off key, who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who slurp their soup....

And we pray for those who never get dessert, who have no safe blanket to drag behind them, who watch their parents watch them die, who can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, who pictures are not on anyone's dresser, whose monsters are real...

We pray for children who spend all their allowance before Tuesday, who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick their food, who like ghost stories, who shove dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse out the tub, who love visits from the tooth fairy, who don't like to be kissed in front of the school bus, who squirm in church and scream in the phone....

And we pray for those whose nightmares come in the daytime, who will eat anything, who have never seen a dentist, who aren't spoiled by anybody, who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep, who live and move and have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried, for those who must, for those we never give up on and those who will grab the hand of anyone kind enough to offer it.