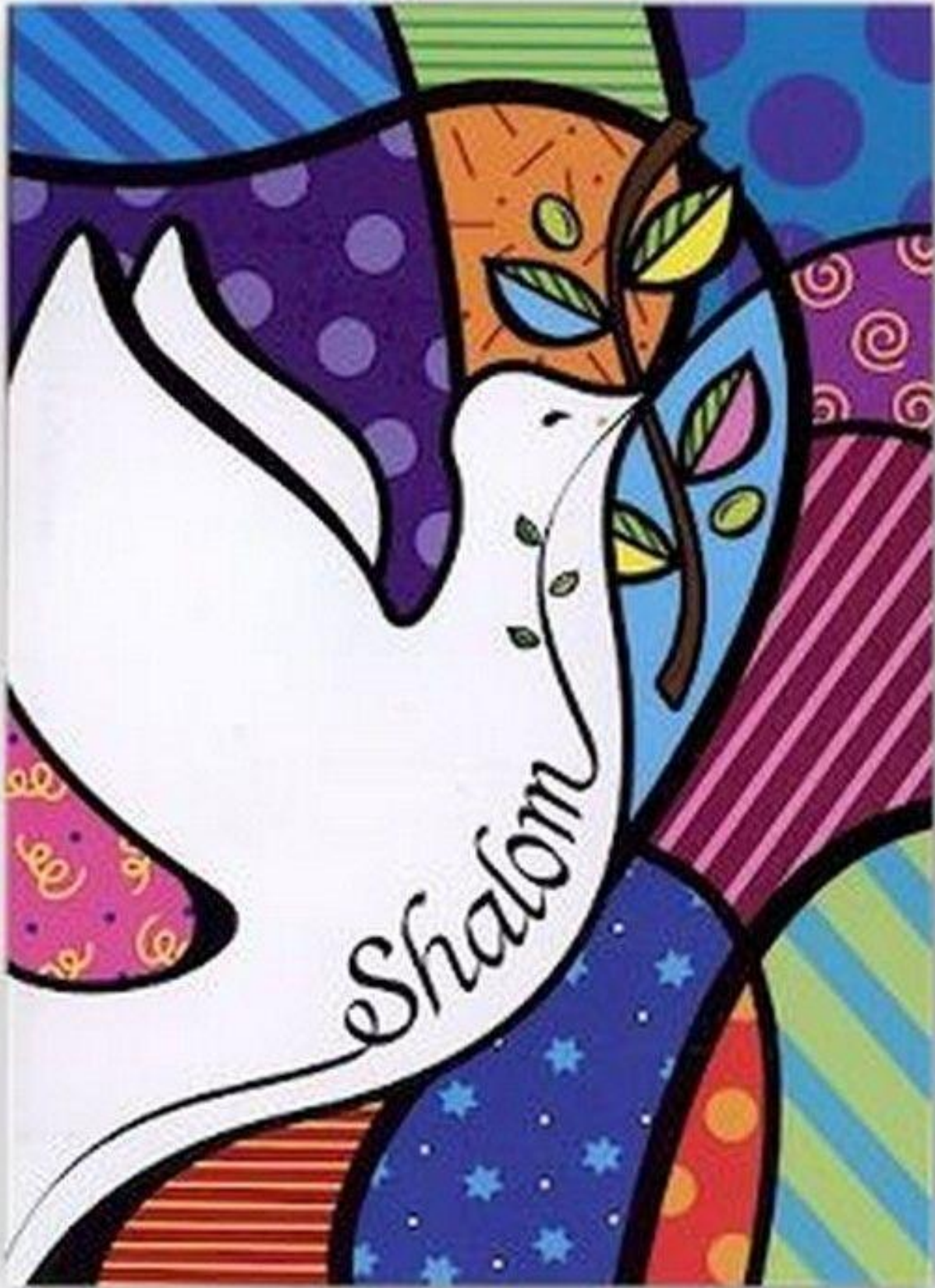


24 February 2023

Let us pray for world peace and focus on Ukraine as it will be one year since the conflict started in Ukraine when the Russian Federation launched their military offensive.



War is not inevitable; it is a man-made disaster. The consequences of inaction are too great:

- For the first time ever, the number of **people displaced due to conflict and persecution** surpassed **100 million** in May 2022.
- **War and civil strife** drive most refugees from the top five source countries: **Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan** and **Myanmar**.
- **One third of Ukraine's population has fled fighting** since Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Europe's largest movement of people since World War II.
- An estimated **120,648 people** were killed in conflicts in 2021.

Sources: [UNHCR](#) (2021), [Uppsala Conflict Data Program](#) (2021)

Map from International Crisis Group <https://www.crisisgroup.org/>



Молитва за Україну (Molytva za Ukrayinu)

Боже великий, єдиний,
Нам Україну храни,
Волі і світу промінням
Ти її осіни.
Світлом науки і знання
Нас, дітей, просвіти,
В чистій любові до краю,
Ти нас, Боже, зрости.
Молимося, Боже єдиний,
Нам Україну храни,
Всі свої ласки й щедроти
Ти на люд наш зверни.
Дай йому волю, дай йому долю,
Дай доброго світу,
Щастя, дай, Боже, народу
І многая, многая літа.

Lord, oh the Great and Almighty,
Protect our beloved Ukraine,
Bless her with freedom and light
Of your holy rays.

With learning and knowledge enlighten
Us, your children small,
In love pure and everlasting
Let us, oh Lord, grow.

We pray, oh Lord Almighty,
Protect our beloved Ukraine,
Grant our people and country
All your kindness and grace.

Bless us with freedom, bless us with wisdom,
Guide into kind world,
Bless us, oh Lord, with good fortune
For ever and evermore.

**Eternal God,
As we are overshadowed once again by war,
We lift up before you
The innocents and vulnerable,
The victims of violence and cruelty,
Along with all who continue to sow the seeds of hate.**

**In the fog of war
Where truth is the first victim,
May your light, which cannot be overwhelmed,
expose the truth.**

**Grant to world leaders and all in positions of power today
Not only the wisdom
But also the courage
To do what is right in your sight.**

**Grant all who turn to you
your strength and fortitude,
Your inner peace,
Along with a continuing faith in your sovereign power,
In the face of military might.**

**All this we pray in the name of the Prince of Peace,
Jesus Christ,
Our living Lord and Saviour.
Amen.**

By the Revd Dave Herbert

There are five areas we can focus our prayers on:

Pray for people affected by the conflict.

- That people still in Ukraine will be protected from the violence; that there will be provision of essential supplies, such as food and clean water. Pray for vulnerable people who cannot flee, for example those with disabilities or the elderly.
- For healing for people who are wounded or have experienced trauma; and comfort for those who are grieving and are far away from home as refugees.
- That people living in Ukraine can access warm spaces throughout the winter. Pray that the gas and electricity infrastructure that has been damaged by shelling can be repaired so that people can heat their homes.

Pray for those in positions of leadership.

- That leaders on both sides will be filled with compassion, wisdom, calm, and a desire for peace.
- That world leaders will balance responding to the injustice of the invasion with seeking ways to build bridges, de-escalate tensions, and restore global security.

Pray for the church.

- That the church in the Ukraine, Russia and across the wider region will be a voice for peace; and that they will have the resources they need to help people who are vulnerable.
- That the church and other organisations around the world will have the courage and conviction to speak out against aggression and injustice.
- That God's power will be revealed through the church in this situation – bringing a message of love and hope amid the darkness.

Pray for the global impact.

- The crisis in Ukraine is already leading to a significant rise in the price of food and fuel. It is likely that this will get worse. Economically poorer countries are disproportionately affected by shocks such as this. Pray that food and fuel prices will stabilise, and that provision will be made for countries in a vulnerable position.

Pray for peace.

- That there will be an immediate end to the violence – that peace will come sooner than anyone could have expected or hoped for.
- That diplomatic solutions will be found that will lead to lasting peace in the region.
- That people who have fled will be able to return home, and that what has been destroyed will be rebuilt.
- For strength for individuals and organisations in Ukraine, Russia and the region who are working for peace at local, national, and regional levels.

The prayer activities above can also be used to pray for other conflicts around the world. Let's continue to pray and act together on behalf of people suffering the effects of violence everywhere.

Here are five different ways of praying that you can use as you pray for Ukraine.

Pray by fasting.

Fasting is a form of prayer that's been around for thousands of years. It involves purposefully giving up something that you'll miss in order to shape your focus.

- First, choose what to fast from. Food is the most common choice, but you could also fast from TV or social media.
- Then, decide how long you want to fast for. Challenge yourself but don't be unrealistic.
- Use the time that you would have spent preparing and eating food, or scrolling through social media, to focus on God.

Pray using scripture.

Choose one of the following passages of scripture to read through or pick your own: Matthew 6:6-13; Isaiah 61:1-4; or Luke 6:20-26.

- Slowly read the passage through and familiarise yourself with it.
- Read it for a second time. Think about the specific needs of the people in Ukraine, those who have fled and the role of the church in this region.
- Before reading it for a third time, pause and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight a word or line to you. Ask God why this was highlighted for you. Continue to listen to God and to the Holy Spirit.
- End by thanking God for working in and through you.

Pray with a map.

As you look at the map, invite the Holy Spirit to reveal a particular location to you. This could be a particular town, area, or border.

Once you have chosen somewhere, lay your hand above it on the map. Pray for that location and the people there. Ask God to reveal specific things you can pray for, or use the first part of this guide to help.

Pray by baking bread.

Bread is often regarded as sacred in Ukrainian culture. Ukraine is an incredibly fertile nation – producing nearly 10 per cent of the world's wheat. Bread and salt placed on an embroidered towel is a symbol of welcome there.

Bread is an important part of Christian celebrations in the country. At Easter, for example, families bake a *Paska* loaf, then take it to church to be blessed before going home to eat it.

Once you have baked the bread, place it on a tea towel. Lay your hands over it and say a prayer for Ukrainian families. Break the bread with your hands (in many Eastern European and Central Asian cultures bread is too sacred to be cut with a knife), then say another prayer for peace in the region.

Pray by lighting a candle.

Jesus is the light of the world. Amid the darkness of conflict in Ukraine and around the world, lighting a candle can become a powerful symbol of an eternal truth: love is stronger than hate.

Find a quiet place where you can relax and light a candle safely. If you can, turn off all other lights. Part of prayer is listening out for how God is already at work – the following activity can help with this.

- Welcome God's presence. This could be by saying 'God, you are here' as you breathe in, 'and I am here with you,' as you breathe out.
- Spend time in thanksgiving for who you know God to be. You may want to play a worship song during this time or read passages from the Bible about God's goodness and mercy.
- Ask God to reveal to you how he is already at work in Ukraine. Be open to hearing God through pictures, scripture or words. You may want to write these down or paint a response. Commit what God is saying to prayer.
- End with another time of thanksgiving for what God has shared. Commit to continuing to join in with God to bring his Kingdom.