



Resources for Worship, Education & Action



An invitation to stand in solidarity with Ukraine

When Presbyterians know more about a conflicted region of the world, we do more. We walk the path of Jesus as companions. We pray. We march and advocate. We partner with those working for a just peace.

Our hearts are tuned to the Ukrainian people as they suffer under the Russian invasion orchestrated by President Putin and his cabinet. Families are torn from each other by death or forced migration. We see refugees in taxed neighboring countries providing food, shelter and safety as they wait to return home. We feel a heaviness for the Russian people, many of whom oppose the war and have lived under brutal regimes, still fresh in their memories.

With this resource, "A Sowing of Peace in Ukraine," we invite congregations, presbyteries, synods and all people embraced in communities of faith to join in a concerted effort for education, worship and actions until the war is ended.

In this set of resources, you will find worship resources, including prayers, litanies and music. You will be invited to choose actions of advocacy and expressions of solidarity. You will learn using creative ideas around film, art, music and food as well as traditional learning options. Together, let us sow the seeds for peace in Ukraine.

Aug. 24 is Ukrainian Independence Day, celebrating the day that Ukraine was formed as an independent nation upon the 1991 Soviet Union collapse. This year during this holiday for Ukrainians, we invite congregations to express solidarity with them and a call for an end to the war in Ukraine through worship, education and action. As the Scriptures encourage us, "there will be a sowing of peace in Ukraine."

To begin, and as a container for this focus, consider including a weekly peace candle as part of your worship experience. A simple symbol of light, perhaps a Russian icon of the much-loved St. Michael, the Archangel, perhaps a sunflower, and one of the included litanies for peace. Consider using Ukrainian art, music from a Ukrainian composer, and prayers and litanies for peace. We will provide suggestions.

A sowing of peace in our world requires planting, watering, fertilizing and a good portion of sun to produce a harvest. And we are the farmers in these fields. We want to know we have done what we can to contribute to the well-being of God's beloved children in Ukraine and those scattered in the diaspora.



For Worship

For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, the ground shall give its produce, and the skies shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

Zechariah 8:12

Litanies

Candle lighting litany

Candle lighting

Reader: We light this candle for peace. (One candle is lit)

Reader: As we do so, we hold space for the people of Ukraine and pray for an end to the war. Let us join together in a moment of silence. (A moment of silence is held)

Reader: May there be a sowing of peace in that land, in our land and in our hearts.

Prayer

God of the oppressed and the free, the migrant and those who live in safety, the grieving and the celebrating, let the day come quickly when there will be a sowing of peace in every land. Today, we pray for Ukraine. Give us courage to deepen our understanding and broaden our actions, for the sake of peace in Ukraine and throughout the world.

Candle lighting (children's version)

Two to three children of different ages participate in this candle lighting (parents optional)

Participant #1: Today we light a candle for the children in Ukraine.

Participant #2: (Lights the candle)

Participant #3: We pray for safety, food, a home and a loving family for all the children of Ukraine.

Participant #4: God, help us to be your peacemakers.

Prayer

We pray for Ukrainian children, that they will be protected, encouraged, loved, and surrounded in safety and peace. Help us remember them. Help us protect them. Help us follow Jesus, our true peacemaker. Amen.



Prayers

A Personal Prayer – When I Cry for the World

Isaiah 58:6–12, Lamentations 2:19, Luke 4:18–19

Merciful Jesus,
I cry for our world.
I cry over broken bodies
and broken homes
and broken hearts.
I cry over violence
and exclusion
and indifference.
I cry most of all over the children!
Through my body and breath,
I pray for your kin-dom ...
For all to have
nourishing food and nurturing homes,
edifying work and safe, skilled schools,
compassionate health care and dignified wages,
soft beds to fall into at the day's close ...
For the children to be protected,
the elderly honored,
and both hugged every single day ...
For reparative justice,
cherished diversity,
and peaceful purity in what's
breathed, eaten and drunk.
I cry and I pray,
confessing the many times
I've declared what I deserve
rather than asked what I could give.

I cry and I pray,
knowing I'm complicit in the pain
and essential to the healing.
I cry and I pray,
trusting my tears mingle with your own,
hoping this tearful river softens and shapes
the hardest canyons of injustice —
or at least lays the groundwork.
I pray and I act,
moving my body and resources
toward your kin-dom vision,
trusting my skills and gifts
carry forward the new, just world you imagine
and are always bringing.
I remember this work is mine to do.
"Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which
he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which
he blesses all the world..."
O Jesus, have mercy
and help me.
Amen.

This prayer, "When I cry for the world," is adapted from [Ash & Starlight: Prayers for the Chaos & Grace of Daily Life](#) by Arianne Braithwaite Lehn. It was published in 2019, and the copyright is owned by the author. The prayer is republished here with permission from Chalice Press. All rights reserved. It was also shared by the Presbyterian Outlook [here](#).



A body prayer for Ukraine

Body prayers are a way to integrate our mind and body's knowledge and be open to God's healing. In this context, it is a way to connect with and pray for another.

Invite the congregation to move if needed to create some room around themselves. Invite participants to focus their attention, in mind, heart and spirit, on those living in Ukraine and those in the diaspora. Lead and encourage some deep breaths with a little longer on the exhale. Pray this prayer three times, leading while participants respond in like. The third time, pray this together.



(Place your hands on your head and say aloud or silently)
God, be in my mind and my thinking. Bring your peace to Ukraine.



(Place your hands on your mouth and say aloud or silently)
God, be in my mouth and my speaking. Bring your justice to Ukraine.



(Place your hands on your heart and say aloud or silently)
God, be in my heart and my feeling. Bring your mercy to Ukraine.

(Place your hands on your stomach and say aloud or in your mind)
God, be in my breath and my breathing. Bring your Spirit to Ukraine.



(Take a deep breath and bring your arms up over your head and back to your heart)
May peace prevail. May peace prevail. Amen.

Music

We Pray for Peace

Tune: Finlandia

Lyrics written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette upon the launch of the Ukraine war, used with permission.

[Find the full lyric here.](#)

We pray for peace, O God of love and justice,
as once again, we face a time of war.
The meek and humble try — amid the crisis —
to love and build, to nurture and restore.
May leaders hear the truth the prophets teach us —
that gifts of peace are well worth struggling for.
We pray for peace, O Christ who calmed the waters —
who stilled the storm, who stilled disciples' fear.
You spoke with love and with amazing power;
be with us now when trouble is so near.
May leaders see the miracle you offer —
that words and deeds can calm the nations here.
We pray for peace, O Spirit here among us;
your love emboldens, judges and restrains.
Take any hate and acts of impulse from us;
make leaders wise, amid competing claims.
May we seek peace, O God of love and justice;
may love and mercy be our highest aims.

Melody

Myroslav Skoryk

Myroslav Skoryk holds the “People’s artist of Ukraine” award 1938–2020 and is a renowned composer with many beautiful pieces that could be incorporated as offertories or special music. Pieces are scored for piano and multiple instruments. Some incorporate traditional Ukrainian music. For YouTube videos and to order scores, see [Duma Music](#).



Discover more about Ukrainian composer, [Myroslav Skoryk](#), “the Moses of Ukrainian music”.

Glory to God

This is my Song, Glory to God hymnal #340

Where Armies Scourge the Countryside (Bring Peace to Earth Again), Glory to God hymnal #344

O Day of Peace, Glory to God hymnal #373

For Education

Eastern Christianity encourages the use of icons as a way to connect deeper devotion to a God who is incarnated in Jesus, honored in his followers and the saints, and experienced through art and music. The contemporary iconographer Photios Kontoglou expressed so well, "Icons raise the soul and mind to the realm of the spirit." This icon, St. Michael, is in the tradition of classical iconography. He is the patron saint of the capital, Kyiv.

One goal of spiritual practice is to slow down and experience God in more expansive ways. This requires us becoming quieter and more focused. We understand that we can experience God with our whole selves; spirit, mind and body. Reflecting with or on an icon can allow the Holy Spirit to speak into this quieter mind and body.



Ways to use this icon:

- Order or print a copy and include it in your candle lighting for church.
- Honoring Ukrainian heritage and their battle for their survival, consider using this icon as a way to reflect on and pray for Ukraine.
- Use traditional iconography as a bulletin cover or project onto a screen.

Icon of St. Michael courtesy of monasteryicons.com.

[Order St. Michael products here.](#)

Invite Mission Co-Worker Ellen Smith to speak and share ways to support the Ukrainian people. Contact Ellen at ellen.smith@pcusa.org.

For Action

Support Relocation Efforts

Support Relocation efforts through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance partner, Church World Service (CWS). Their effort Uniting for Ukraine focuses on securing funds for those seeking to resettle in the U.S. In this approach, partnerships are created with the support of CWS staff that last for the first six month of their move to the U.S. Learn more and consider support. [Church World Service sponsorship](#)

Ban Cluster Munitions

Ban cluster munitions, or “anti-personal landmines,” which are being transferred to Ukraine by the U.S. government. The Office of Public Witness attended a White House National Security Council Staff and Department of Defense meeting with many other organizations opposing the action, but the decision was made to send them. These munitions have been banned for 120 years because of their devastating impact on human life. Presbyterians are advocating through the U.S. Campaign to Ban Land Mines. Consider including this in your congregation or presbytery’s advocacy efforts. [Sign this letter and support the ban here.](#)

Support Ukrainian Artists

Ukraine has many wonderful artists. Celebrate the rich landscape of artistry and support their cultural expressions.

- As in the U.S., Etsy has become a place for Ukrainian artists to share their art. [This link](#) connects to paintings, banners, pottery and more. Perhaps one of these artists can be added to your Fair Trade Christmas list.
- Maria Prymachenko is arguably Ukraine’s most loved folk artist (1909–1997). Although her art is not copyrighted for our use, we commend it to you for your education and edification. She uses traditional color and texture. In particular, the painting A Dove Has Spread Her Wings And Asks for Peace, 1982.
- [Kitmizereart](#) is a modern Ukrainian artist with amazing reflections on women and animals. It would fit beautifully in many settings.



Upcoming highlights

Watch for the following in future installments of A Sowing of Peace in Ukraine:

- A Godly Play story about a Ukrainian peacemaker.
- A grandmother’s Ukrainian pierogi recipe.
- Educational film suggestions.

