

Dear Friends

As we begin Lent this week we cannot help but be appalled and shocked at the Russian invasion of Ukraine. What is happening is heart breaking and unjust as innocent people suffer helplessly. It is difficult to look on and see such destruction. We want to do something and it has been heartening this week to see many ways that congregations and individuals have prayed, expressed support for the Ukrainian people and responded practically.

I have today been part of a zoom gathering of bishops where we have heard, amongst others, from one of the bishops in the Diocese of Europe, from a former ambassador to the Ukraine, and from the Anglican Chaplain of St Andrew's Church in Moscow. Two of the speakers notes are attached for information. On all sides there is fear, anger and desperation and our support and prayers are needed in the coming days and beyond.

Below is a summary of how people can respond, which you may wish to share with those in your congregations.

Prayer

Please continue to intercede, here are some prayer pointers:

- For the people of Ukraine and for their leaders as they counter the attacks on their country and fear for their lives
- For the leaders of nations, for diplomacy, for pressure on the Russian leadership, including the Russian Orthodox Church, for peace
- For the people of Russia who are living in fear, for courage to speak out and protest
- For the Anglican Church in Europe in those lands, particularly the small congregation of Christ Church, Kyev and the congregation of St Andrew's, Moscow
- For the journalists working in Russia and the Ukraine, for good channels of communication
- For the humanitarian response to the crisis, international aid agencies, for our own response to be effective as we give in the best possible way
- For refugees, their welcome, the hospitality of nations and our own government's response

There are some helpful resources on the Diocese of Europe's website, including liturgy:

<https://europe.anglican.org/main/latest-news/post/1783-resources-for-the-ukraine-crisis>

Giving

Although we may want to give practically, there are increasing messages from aid agencies stating that unless there are key contacts in the Ukraine or neighbouring countries, any collections of provisions may get in the way of planned responses. Therefore, the best way to give is financially.

Disaster Emergency Committee charities, which includes Christian Aid, World Vision and the Red Cross, are in Ukraine and neighbouring countries meeting the needs of all refugees and displaced people:

£30 can provide essential hygiene supplies for three people for one month

£50 can provide blankets for four families

£100 can provide emergency food for two families for one month

<https://donation.dec.org.uk/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal>

Other appeals include:

- [With Ukraine](#) is a special fund to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine's civilian population established by the Embassy of Ukraine in the UK.
- [UAHELP – Support Ukraine](#) is coordinating donations and deliveries of essential goods, medicines, food products, special, and medical equipment, as well as volunteer registrations.

Action

- We are encouraged to continue to exercise pressure on government regarding refugees. Please send an email to your local MP urging them to support Ukraine by pushing for safe passage for refugees.
- Please stand with local Ukrainian and Russian families who need support at this time, all are fearful in different ways, especially children in our schools. Our school leaders may also need support in talking about the conflict to children.

The crisis is urgent and requires the attention and solidarity of the global Christian community. The Scriptures encourage us to turn away from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it (1 Peter 3: 11). As we begin Lent, we stand with the people of Ukraine, praying for a ceasefire to save lives, that justice may flow across the world and we can all live in freedom.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel.

+ Kara Shebaine