

Prayer for the Peace in Ukraine¹

Hymn “Sun of righteousness/ Sonne der Gerechtigkeit” (77,1-3)

Introduction

We gather tonight as a community in prayer. No matter our different beliefs or faith traditions, we are united here in our desire for an end of war in Ukraine. Whatever violence happens to one person, matters to us. What is happening now in Ukraine matters to us all, regardless religion, denomination, culture, and ethnicity.

Confession

Prayer of Confession

Let us offer our confession with words from the ancient Persian payer:

All that we ought to have thought, and have not thought,
All that we ought to have said, and have not said,
All that we ought to have done and have not done.
All that we ought not to have thought, and yet have thought,
All that we ought not to have spoken, and yet have spoken,
All that we ought not to have done, and yet have done.
For thoughts, words and works, pray we, O God, for forgiveness.

Hymn: “Sun of righteousness/ Sonne der Gerechtigkeit” (77,4-7)

Lectionary

From Jewish Scriptures:

Isaiah 57:15-19

15. For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also, with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. 16. For I will not continually accuse, nor will I always be angry. for then the spirits would grow taint before me, even the souls that I have made. 17. Because of their wicked covetousness I was angry; I struck them, I mid and was angry. but they kept turning back to their own ways. 18. I have seen their ways, but I will heal them. I will lead them and repay them with comfort, creating for their mourners the fruit of the lips. 19. Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the Lord; and I will heal them.

Hymn: “Seigneur, rassemble-nous/ Unite us, Lord in peace” (79)

¹ This prayer was held for the first time in the Baptist Peace Cathedral Tbilisi (Georgia) on 14th January 2023. The hymns are suggestions from the CPCE hymnbook “Colors of Grace - Hymnbook of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe”



From Christian Scriptures:

Matthew 5:3-12

3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.' 7 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 7. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.10. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.11. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Homily/Reflection

Supplications from Psalm 31

1st Voice

In you, Oh Lord, I seek refuge.
do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.
Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily.
Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me.
You are indeed my rock and my fortress.
for your name's sake lead me and guide me,
take me out of the net that is hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.

Antiphon²

2nd Voice

Into your hand I commit my spirit.
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.
You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,
but I trust in the Lord.
I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love,
because you have seen my affliction.
you have taken heed of my adversities,
and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;
you have set my feet in a broad place.

Antiphon

3rd Voice

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress,
my eye wastes away from grief,

² If possible with an Ukrainian Antiphon („Kyrie Eleison“)

my soul and body also.
For my life is spent with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my misery,
and my bones waste away.

Antiphon

4th Voice

I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors,
an object of dread to my acquaintances.
those who see me in the street flee from me.
I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.
For I hear the whispering of many— terror all around! —
as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

Antiphon

5th Voice

But I trust in you, O Lord.
I say, 'You are my God.'
My times are in your hand.
Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.
Do not let me be put to shame, O Lord, for I call on you;
let the wicked be put to shame;
let them go dumbfounded to Sheol.

Antiphon

6th Voice

Let the lying lips be stilled
that speak insolently against the righteous with pride and contempt.
O how abundant is your goodness
that you have laid up for those who fear you,
and accomplished for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of everyone!
In the shelter of your presence you hide them from human plots;
you hold them safe under your shelter from contentious tongues.

Antiphon

7th Voice

Blessed be the Lord,
for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me
when I was beset as a city under siege.
I had said in my alarm,
'am driven far from your sight.'
But you heard my supplications when I cried out to you for help.
Love the Lord, all you his saints.
The Lord preserves the faithful,
but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily.

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the Lord.

Antiphon

Lighting of the Peace Candle

Intercession for Peace

Leading pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord!
Almighty God,

One: We pray for the leaders of the nations,
that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and truth. Lord, in your mercy

All: hear our prayer.

One: We pray for those who bear arms on behalf of the nation, that they may cease to co-operate with evil, leave discipline and discernment, courage and compassion. Lord, in your mercy

All: hear our prayer.

One: We pray for the enemies of peace, and those who wish to harm the innocent, that you will turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship. Lord, in your mercy

All: hear our prayer.

One: We pray for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless,
that in all their trials they may know your love and support. Lord, in your mercy

All: hear our prayer.

One: Most holy God and our Creator, hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice. Help us, who today remember the cost of not doing so.

Hymn “Abide with me/ Bleib bei mir, Herr“ (153)

Prayer for Ukraine³

One God of All,
God of Chesed (Loving-kindness),
Agape (Love) and
Rahmall (Compassion),

³ (The prayer was composed by Evangelical-Baptist Metropolitan Bishop of Tbilisi Dr. Malkhaz Songulashvili on the 21st day of the war). The bishop is well known for his interreligious work for peace.

We offer these prayers and supplications to You, believing that You, our hope and our salvation,

Have heard our cries,
Have seen our tears, have felt our pain,
Have been with the suffering on all sides, have been with those who run for their lives,
Have been with those hiding in subway stations, churches, mosques, synagogues,
Have been with mothers giving birth in shelters and bombarded hospitals,
Have been with the mutilated, maimed and murdered,
have been with those experiencing cruelty, inhumanity, and injustice.

Bring healing to all victims of the war in Ukraine and to all of us,
Turn the hearts of the tyrants and oppressors towards love,
Turn the hearts of the fearful and tearful towards joy,
Turn the hearts of the merciless and ruthless towards compassion,
Turn the hearts of the unjust and unfair towards justice,
Turn the hearts of the distressed and oppressed towards hope.

Refresh our love for You,
Refresh our love for non-violence,
refresh our love for our neighbors,
Refresh our love and care for all creation.

Deepen our ability to accept diversity,
Deepen our respect for all creation and its members, deepen our empathy for all those who are suffering, Deepen our commitment to peace and justice.

Strengthen those who are wounded, captive, grieving or homeless,
Strengthen doctors, nurses and medical personnel who look after the wounded and sick
Strengthen people and countries who receive the refugees from Ukraine,
Strengthen those who work tirelessly to overcome the horrors and deprivations of war.

Make us instruments of Your love,
Make us instruments of Your freedom,
Make all of us instruments of Your peace.

May bombs and bullets be banished,
May joy rain down upon the people of Ukraine, Georgia⁴, Russia and the rest of world. May we study war no more!

Amen.

Benediction

Hymn “May the road rise to meet you” (153)

Text: with courtesy of the Metropolitan Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili and Bishop Rusadan Gotsiridze, Evangelical-Baptist Church of Georgia

⁴ Here the country where the prayer take place can be filled in instead of “Georgia!”