

## Prayer for Peace, Hope and Justice

On Thursday morning, around 05h00 Eastern European Time, Russia launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine, its neighbour to the southwest, marking a dramatic escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War that began in 2014.

The invasion was preceded by a Russian military build-up that started in early 2021, during which Russian president Vladimir Putin criticized NATO's post-1997 enlargement as a threat to his country's security and demanded that Ukraine be legally prohibited from joining the military alliance, NATO;

On Monday 21 February 2022, Russia officially recognised the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, two self-proclaimed states in eastern Ukraine, and sent troops to the territories.

The following day, Tuesday, the Russian Federation Council unanimously authorised Putin to use military force outside Russia's borders.

Around 05:00 on Thursday, Putin announced a "special military operation" in eastern Ukraine; minutes later, missiles began to hit locations across Ukraine, including the capital, Kyiv, as images via the media confirm

Two hours later, Russian ground forces entered the country.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy responded by enacting martial law, severing diplomatic ties with Russia, and ordering general mobilisation.

The invasion received widespread international condemnation, including new sanctions imposed on Russia, while anti-war protests in Russia were met with mass arrests.

The following poem by Mahmoud Darwish reminds us of the true casualties of war:

*"The war will end,  
The leaders will shake hands,  
The old woman will keep waiting for her martyred son,  
That woman will wait for her beloved husband,  
And those children will wait for their hero father.  
I don't know who sold our homeland,  
But I saw who paid the price"*

Let us pray:

O Lord, we know that you weep when you see the suffering caused by war,  
When people in power abuse that power, with no regard to the consequences of that abuse of power,  
We bring before you the leaders directly and indirectly involved in the war between Russia and Ukraine, Israel & Palestine, every site of conflict across the globe and in our communities

We bring before you those drawn into the conflict due to their association and loyalties,

We pray for wisdom that guides decisions that will turn swords into ploughshares,

O Lord, we know that even the produce of the harvest is under threat due to this war,

That suffering from the effects of a global pandemic, climate change, corruption and economic decay are deepened by another conflict that affects everything, including food supply,

We pray for strength and courage as we seek your guidance as a community and as individuals to respond to the suffering around us as you call us to do,

In the power of your Holy Spirit, inspire us to speak truth to power, to act justly, show constant love and walk humbly with you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,

We pray the prayer for Africa:

GOD BLESS AFRICA & ALL THE WORLD, GUARD OUR CHILDREN, GUIDE OUR LEADERS AND GIVE US PEACE.  
AMEN

Terence Parker CMM

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