

Opening Responses (from the Iona Community)

We gather here in your presence, God,

In our need,

And bringing with us the needs of the world.

We come to you, for you come to us in Jesus,

And you know by experience what human life is like.

We come with our faith and with our doubts;

We come with our hopes and with our fears.

We come as we are, because you invite us to come;

And you have promised never to turn us away.

StF 696 For the healing of the nations

1 For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

2 Lead us forward into freedom;
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and
hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and
goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

3 All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned;

pride of status, race, or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.

4 You, Creator-God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan (1929–2009)

*Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words
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London N3 1DZ <www.stainer.co.uk>*

Prayer (from the Joint Public Issues Team of the Churches of England)

God of all,

with alarm and concern we bring before you the military intervention in
Ukraine.

In a world you made for peace and flourishing, we lament the use of armed
force.

A Service of Prayer for Ukraine and Russia

2

We mourn every casualty of this conflict,
every precious life extinguished by war.

We pray comfort for those who grieve and those who are fearful.

Hear our longing that leaders and nations will honour the worth of all people
by having the courage to resolve conflict through dialogue.

May all our human failings be transformed by your wonderful grace and
goodness.

We ask this in the name of Christ, the author of peace and sustainer of
Creation. **Amen.**

*Look at this image of Kyiv and think about what has happened there over the
last few days.*



“We were wakened at 5am by a phone call from a church member to tell us
that bombs were falling on different locations in Kyiv, the same is happening
in Kharkiv and Odessa. It is so painful – all three cities are beautiful historic
cities filled with peaceful citizens” - *Methodist member in Ukraine (taken from
the All We Can website and their Emergency Appeal for Ukraine)*

These quotes are taken from a service of Prayer for Peace in St Nicholas (Nikolaikirche) in Leipzig on 7 February 2021

Archbishop Brauer of Moscow wrote: "I am deeply concerned about what is happening around my country. And I am no less confused about the state of relations between countries and peoples that are equally dear, related and dear to me. Particularly frightening are the latest signals of a possible war ... At this moment, everything in me falls silent and only one thing comes into place: Lord, have mercy on you! This call is currently becoming an urgent inner need for us. Lord, have mercy! Protect us from political arbitrariness, from the power of evil and from bloodshed. Despite all the tensions, keep us in the unity of your spirit."

from the Lutheran congregation St Katherine's in Kiev, Pastor Matthias Lasi wrote "Many people in Kiev are afraid, but they are used to living with uncertainty and fear. Therefore, daily life continues as usual. Those who can, however, prepare for an emergency: savings are exchanged for euros, an emergency suitcase is packed and supplies are created to bridge a few days. We all hope and pray that diplomacy will find a successful balance. For some of our parishioners, the situation is particularly difficult, as they were very worried about their relatives in Kazakhstan just a few days ago. Also, many families have relatives in Russia. From this very stressful situation for all of us, I thank you all for thinking of us and our brothers and sisters in Russia."

Prayer (from the Iona Community)

Where there are no words, great God,
you wait in the silence,
filling it with promise,
with longing, with healing.

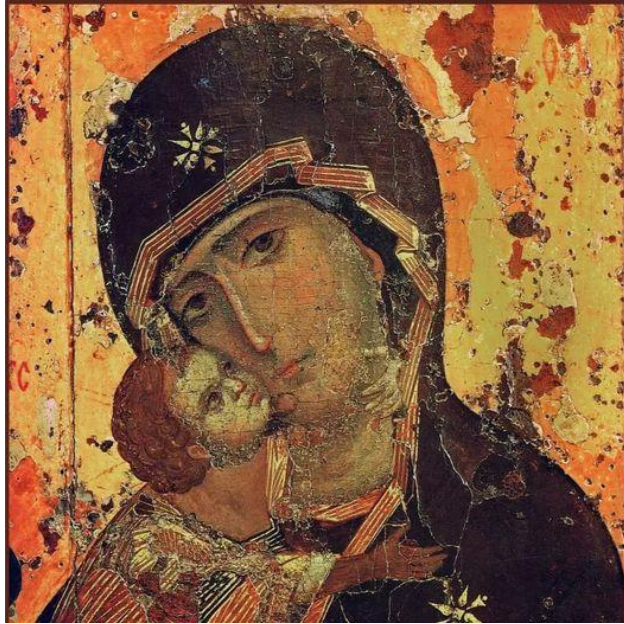
Where there are no words, Saviour Jesus,
you wait beside us, enfolding us,
surrounding us, embracing us.

Where there are no words, Holy Spirit,
you wait within us,
provoking us with heaven,
disturbing us with justice,

infesting us with grace.

Where there are no words, Holy God,
there we wait on you, and find you already waiting on us. Amen.

Silence



Our Lady of Kiev

As we look at this image, damaged by years of conflict, let us ask forgiveness for the arrogance, greed and suspicion that has led the world to this point.

Hear Christ's word of grace: "Your sins are forgiven"

Amen. Thanks be to God.

StF 700 God Weeps at Love Withheld

1 God weeps
at love withheld,
at strength misused,
at children's innocence abused,
and till we change the way we love,
God weeps.

2 God bleeds
at anger's fist,
at trust betrayed,
at women battered and afraid,
and till we change the way we win,
God bleeds.

3 God cries
at hungry mouths,

at running sores,
at creatures dying without cause,
and till we change the way we care,
God cries.

4 God waits
for stones to melt,
for peace to seed,
for hearts to hold each other's need,
and till we understand the Christ,
God waits.

Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931)

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"I No Longer Pray For Peace" By Ann Weems

On the edge of war, one foot already in,
I no longer pray for peace:
I pray for miracles.
I pray that stone hearts will turn to tender-heartedness,
and evil intentions will turn to mercifulness,
and all the soldiers already deployed will be snatched out of harm's way,
and the whole world will be astounded onto its knees.
I pray that all the "God talk" will take bones,

and stand up and shed its cloak of faithlessness,
and walk again in its powerful truth.
I pray that the whole world might sit down together and share its bread and its wine.
Some say there is no hope,
but then I've always applauded the holy fools
who never seem to give up on the scandalousness of our faith:
that we are loved by God.....
that we can truly love one another.
I no longer pray for peace:
I pray for miracles.

Reflect on your reaction to this poem. Do you think the poet is right to pray for miracles rather than peace?

The Gospel for today is Luke 9: 28 – 36. It is an account of Jesus transfiguration. It is the point when the disciples realised that Jesus was divine as well as human. It is the turning point when Jesus began the journey towards his death in Jerusalem. It is also a reminder that he embraces our humanity and, because of that, we too can be transfigured by glory and bring about healing in this world.

I have recently learned that the President of Ukraine was a sitcom actor before he stood for the presidency. People expected him to be a joke, to run away from challenges, but this crisis has transformed him into an inspirational leader. Like Jesus, he is with his people in their suffering, he has not turned his back or run away.

May we have the same strength and faith to keep praying for miracles throughout this crisis. AMEN

StF 649 God when human bonds are broken

1 God! When human bonds are
broken
and we lack the love or skill
to restore the hope of healing,
give us grace and make us still.

2 Through that stillness, with your
Spirit
come into our world of stress,
for the sake of Christ forgiving
all the failures we confess.

3 You in us are bruised and broken:
hear us as we seek release

from the pain of earlier living;
set us free and grant us peace.

4 Send us, God of new beginnings,
humbly hopeful into life.
Use us as a means of blessing:
make us stronger, give us faith.

5 Give us faith to be more faithful,
give us hope to be more true,
give us love to go on learning:
God! Encourage and renew!

Fred Kaan (1929–2009)

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London N3 1DZ <www.stainer.co.uk>*

There is a feeling that we stand on the brink of a much larger conflict, possibly another world war. Here are some words written on the eve of the Second World War which are equally relevant today.

From W H Auden's September 1st 1939

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

Light a candle

We light our candles as a symbol of God's light, shining into our confusion, frustration and pain, drawing from it the comfort of knowing that God is with us and with those caught up in the conflict, always.

If it is not already there, place the candle in the window.



We put this candle in the window, to shine the light of God's love out into the world, so that those facing unimaginable challenges, fearing the worst, and feeling abandoned and alone will know that they are not forgotten.

We shine our lights into the darkness, praying for cold hearts to be melted, for strength to resist an oppressor and for faith to keep hope alive;

we ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ, son of God and Prince of Peace, **AMEN**

Light a Candle (taken from a song by Garth Hewitt)

Light a candle in the darkness, Light a candle in the night
Let the light of God unite us, Light a candle in the night.

Prayer (from the Methodist Website)

Holy and Gracious God

We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders.

We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear.

We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness.

We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace.

We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ.

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine.

And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son.

Lord have mercy. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Peace (from the Iona Community)

Not an easy peace,
not an insignificant peace.
not a half-hearted peace,
but the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with us now.
Let us strengthen the bond of unity
by sharing the peace of Christ with all we meet. AMEN

StF 55 All my hope on God is founded

1 All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he
 guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2 Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3 God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom passing thought;
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore

from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4 Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

5 Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all
ye who follow shall not fall.

*Robert Bridges (1844–1930) (alt.)
based on Joachim Neander (1650–1680)
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Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
We have put our fears and our hopes into your hands,
Take and hold them, we pray.
Use our time, our talents, our strength
To bring a lasting and enduring peace to your broken world.
For your name's sake we pray, **Amen**