



Good Morning everyone,

Welcome to another time for Reflection in our Devotional for the month of March and who would have believed that things could have developed the way they have, given we are beginning to come out of this awful health recession that has been Covid-19 with a worldwide death toll that has gone into the millions whilst leaving many many others struggling with the impact of long term illness. As restrictions begin to relax while our Medical Experts and Scientists still raise some concern about infection rates and new variants of the disease, we now have a brand new crisis to deal with the threat of War across the neighbouring countries of Europe with the world holding its breath as International politics fails to appease the ambitions of one dictator and his nation's aspiration for empire building. Many will be wondering where is God in the midst of all the rising prices for fuel food heating and lighting, the economic uncertainty of it all for employment as well as the danger and violence, suffering and bloodshed? Hopefully in our reflection this morning we can ponder these things and perhaps find that the light of hope still flickers in these worst of situations and that the place of Faith in God and his eternal purposes can be a reassurance and strength that sustains us through these uncertain days ahead.

In the meantime we will need to look and see how best we can support those who are suffering the worst excesses of these troubled times while we here in the UK can still enjoy a freedom of expression and opinion in these times while others may not.

For now I hope may all experience that sense of God's Grace Mercy and peace in these days to come.

Wishing you God's Blessing.

Calum D. Macdonald



Welcome to the Park Church
MONTHLY BULLETIN

**PRAYER
MEETING**
EVERYONE IS WELCOME
Tuesday Mornings

**We can now
Enjoy Tea,
Coffee and a
blether after
church again**

STATED Giffnock: the Park Church 
**ANNUAL
MEETING**
WEDNESDAY 16th MARCH 2022
7.30PM

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW
COMING SOON
TO PARK CHURCH

April

Joint Churches Holy Week services will return
Easter Breakfast and Communion Service

May

Missionary Aviation Fellowship come to Park Church
Eastwood Choir Charity Concert in support of the Ukraine
Crisis

June

Congregational Meal belatedly celebrating the Church'
along with Her Majesty, the Queen's Platinum jubilee

August

The Return of Summer Mission to Park Church
Praise in the Park – Joint churches event in Rouken Glen Park



AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha

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The Church of Scotland

A Letter Submitted to every Presbytery At the Outbreak of the Ukraine Crisis

Today as I write to you it is with a heavy heart, hearing the news and speaking directly to partners in Ukraine about the dreadful situation there. It would be easy to feel powerless but there are several things we can do to help. We have been in touch with partners in the region, and with the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and others to ascertain the best way to offer help.

The Rev. Balázs Ódor, Ecumenical Officer for the Reformed Church in Hungary, has been in direct contact with us and we have been able to contact the Bishop's Office in the Reformed Church in Carpathian Ukraine, and some congregations in Ukraine. It is good to take just a little time to do this so that the right kind of help is given in a way in which it can be used on the ground where it is needed most.

From these contacts, we suggest that you might share through Presbytery networks and with congregations the opportunity to give, via the Church of Scotland, to Reformed Church in Hungary Aid (RCHA), which is run by our partner, the Reformed Church of Hungary. The RCHA has access to the Reformed church in Ukraine who are using their buildings to support the people moving from east to west as they seek safety and sanctuary. They also are working in the border areas of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania using the Reformed Church contacts and buildings there.

*They are providing daily updates and you can see more Information here:
<https://reformatus.hu/english/news/emergency-response-for-ukraine/>*

Though RCHA you can support those fleeing from the east and coming to the west of Ukraine where they can be helped through the churches there; those in the west already who don't have access to their money when the banks run out and who will need food/help; and those who cross the borders into Hungary, Slovakia or Romania.

Your donations can be directed to the following account:

Royal Bank of Scotland

Church of Scotland No 1 Account

Account no 00134859

Sort code 83 06 08

Reference RCHA donation - Please gift aid this if possible.

St Columba's, Budapest

We have also heard from our Church of Scotland congregation in Budapest who have opened their church and the mission centre up to give sanctuary and a place of rest to refugees as they journey through. In the centre last night were woman and children and in the church were 15 Nigerian students who had travelled solidly for 3 days to get to safety.

Rev Aaron Steven and his congregation are seeking to provide a 24hour service of love and care to those that need them also. Please keep them in your prayers also.

The Reformed Church in Poland

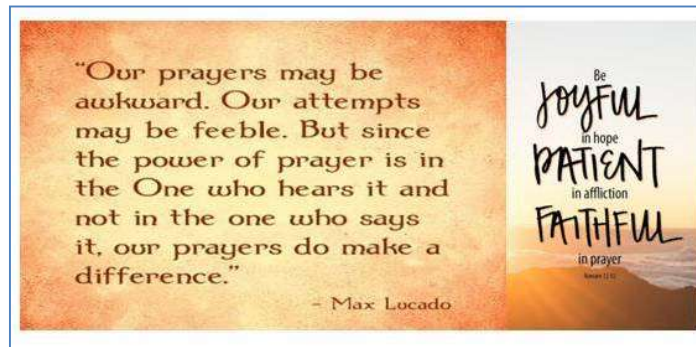
The Reformed Church in Poland, while small, is doing what it can to support those arriving in Poland. Some Parishes are hosting refugees. One is trying to create a retreat and recovery centre for traumatised people. The congregation in Łódź, where there are already 250,000 Ukrainians living, is cooperating with a Roman Catholic foundation, and seeking to support children and students living and studying there.

We keep all in our prayers.

Please feel free to email Carol on cfinlay@churchofscotland.org.uk if you have any questions,

With best wishes

**Very Rev Dr Susan Brown
Convener Faith Impact Forum**



Our prayer today has adopted and adapted the prayer of Archbishop Justin Welby for our Devotional today

Let us Pray ...

God our Father in Heaven once again in our deepest times of need, we come to you, seeking your Grace and mercy upon us. We recognise that we as individuals, as a Church and as a nation have failed consistently to rise to Your standards of perfection proving time and again that we cannot fulfil all that You demand of us in our own strength. It is with a thankful heart that we can come to you openly and honestly at any time and know that you will hear our Prayer - such is your love for us. More than that, you have bestowed upon this fallen broken world the Gift of your Son Jesus who on that first Easter did something so marvellous, something so miraculous, something gracious beyond compare. Our deepest, darkest sins stand forgiven through the cross of Calvary and the Suffering of the Saviour there. The Miracle of Resurrection has established the promise of assurance through faith in Jesus and an eternal home in your Presence when this life is over, all because You loved us and Your Son gave himself for us. For all that you deserve our eternal praise and thanks and more.

Forgive us in the moment when we fail to act when we should, forgive us for the harsh words we use against others or You in our desire to follow our wishes and desires rather than yours and in your forgiveness teach us that we may better live a life that honour you in witness and the service of others.

Father your creation is indeed a wonderful thing but we recognise like us it too is broken at times resulting in people's lives lost or ruined. In these moments of crisis, Help us that we might help others we pray.

We recognise that Humanity has a greater need for You now more than ever before when we see inhumanity to one another through greed and the desire for power, through our arrogance, selfishness and pride. And so we come to You our Gracious God and Father as you and you alone can broker

true Peace with a sense of Justice that is above reproach. We pray for Peace and justice in our world today. We pray for every people and every nation but we pray especially for the people of Ukraine in this time of conflict, for all your precious children there, at risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them. We pray for all those in conflict but we remember those in Ukraine Especially seeking that a lasting peace be established and hostilities cease. We long to see weapons laid down that guns may be turned into ploughshares.

In these uncertain times we remember before you all who fear for their lives and for even what tomorrow may hold, again - we remember before you those in the land of Ukraine. May your Spirit draw near and comfort them. We pray for those with power over war or peace - may right be done in all this and therefore we pray for those involved in diplomacy seeking wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

We pray that Peace may indeed reign and that war may indeed cease in Jesus' name ...

Amen

PSALM 122



Psalm 122

A song of ascents. Of David.

- ¹ I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
- ² Our feet are standing
in your gates, Jerusalem.
- ³ Jerusalem is built like a city
that is closely compacted together.
- ⁴ That is where the tribes go up—
the tribes of the LORD—
to praise the name of the LORD
according to the statute given to Israel.
- ⁵ There stand the thrones for judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.
- ⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May those who love you be secure.
- ⁷ May there be peace within your walls
and security within your citadels.”
- ⁸ For the sake of my family and friends,
I will say, “Peace be within you.”
- ⁹ For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your prosperity.



Before we launch into the reflection for this morning, let me offer an apology by way of explanation. I have thought to continue this reflection for the time being on a monthly basis as many are still unsure about coming out to church and some are not able to get out and about at all. I had the thought that the start of each month would be a good regular spot to see through the production of the Devotional but had not vectored my Glasgow Street Pastors duties which would impinge on some of the weekends at the start of the month as the year progresses. With that proviso I will return to the usual first of the month when not on Street Pastors duty and on those occasions I am on duty, I will produce the Devotional the following week.

That all being, let me now turn to what I thought might be a word in season for us based on these words above from Psalm 122vs 6&7,

“ Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem...”

Words that seek to see both peace and security fall upon the city of Jerusalem at times of trouble or distress. Once again in turning to the Psalms we can find comforting words in God our Father's Promises.

In the shadow of Your wings I will take shelter until the danger has passed.
(Psalm 91:4)

Many will recognise these words as familiar to us from a chorus we have often sung called, 'Living under the shadow of his wing'. Elsewhere in the Psalms we might think of the opening words from Psalm 46: 1-

“ God is our strength and refuge, a present help in times of trouble,”

Another hymn we often sing to the tune of the Dambuster's march synonymous with that classic film from the mid 1950's. The sentiment of these words will be obvious as the constant 24 hour news cycle updates us on latest developments in all that is happening in Ukraine where peace and security are certainly most uppermost in the minds of Ukrainians on the front line defending their homeland.

We here in the UK cannot really begin to understand what it means to suffer invasion and occupation as the last time when these lands were invaded was probably the time of the Normans under William the Conqueror invading the Saxons or perhaps when the Vikings invaded during the time of Alfred the Great. The people of Israel however knew all too well the fear of invasion and so they looked to God to sustain them through these times.

In 1948, the State of Israel was finally recognised and as it was re-established, it was much to the upset of many of their Arab neighbours not least the Palestinians who saw themselves as having a prior claim on the land. For the first time in hundreds of years the Jewish Diaspora - those who had been living as strangers in strange lands and were often treated as unwelcome finally had a home they could call their own. During the subsequent years where conflict with their Arab neighbours was all consuming and war between these nations raged, in churches across the lands and here in the UK you would often here the cry go up, to 'Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem'. In following that story our Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC sent an open letter across the church in which his opening words say this... *"I write to you at a time when we are especially conscious of the need for action in response to the situation in Ukraine. It is beyond the capacity of any one of us to fully comprehend the enormity of the situation and the consequences of what is taking place. Many people in our country have put concern into action by supporting agencies bringing aid to those in need in time of war and I encourage you to do so.*

Alongside this, there is an accompanying action that we can all take: Prayer. If, like me, you find it difficult to know how to pray at such a time as this, we may recall the words of the Apostle Paul and the assurance they bring:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. (Romans 8: 26)

As we pray with frail words, the Spirit intercedes for us 'with sighs too deep for words'."

The land of Israel has enjoyed a time of relative political stability and peace and I think it would be fair to say right now the land of the Ukraine would envy the land of Israel. We have a cruel irony in that a land here in Eastern Europe, a young nation looking to having established itself now has its own Diaspora with millions fleeing their homes for fear of being killed with millions becoming refugees in different lands round about.

The Moderator of the General Assembly is quite right in identifying how impotent to act we may feel in every sphere except one. The cry should go up

-PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF, NOT JUST JERUSALEM, BUT FOR THE UKRAINE AND ANY OTHER LAND THAT PEACE AND SECURITY IS UNDER THREAT.

Finally in closing I wanted to share some wise words from an old friend of mine, the Rev John Stuart of Erin Presbyterian Church in Knoxville; Tennessee.

Every Blessing

Calum D. Macdonald

John 6:18-20



A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." (NIV)

I don't know anyone right now who isn't worried about the future because of the war in Ukraine. We're all hoping and praying that it doesn't escalate because it's the nearest we've been to a nuclear conflict since the 1960s. The threat of such destructive hostility is hampering our recovery from Covid. Just when we thought that we could get back to normal, we're faced with another dangerous issue.

The fear that we're carrying within us is both stressful and exhausting. We're getting through each day as best as we can, but we just don't know what tomorrow will bring. Most of us have probably given up watching the news and cocoon ourselves by binge watching favorite movies or some new series just to allow our minds to escape from what's happening in the world. Everything seems to be up in the air and, as Bob Dylan once prophetically sang, the answer is blowing in the wind. When will we ever learn, indeed!

As I personally reflect on this, I think about God's timing. Here we are at a time when our churches are at last being opened fully, in the midst of another European war, and an impending global storm. Our sanctuaries have always been safe places in times of unrest, so is God inviting us back to gather together in Christ's presence, so that we can support one another and get through this bewildering time?

Just like the disciples of old, we've been rowing hard on our own to get through these rough waters and fearful waves, but we haven't made any headway. We need


Christ to come alongside us and get into this rocky and leaky boat we call church in order to find the strength, peace, and calm that we all need.

As we struggle with our present difficulties, it seems to me that Christ is calling all of us to clamber back onboard His ship and trust Him to set the course through these troubled times. His reassuring words are given to us to extinguish our fears: "It is I; don't be afraid."

Don't be alone any more, using up all of your strength and carrying all of your burdens on your own. Come back to church, wherever you are, and let Jesus comfort and strengthen you.

May Christ bless you and all your loved ones.

Pastor John



May God bless
every step we take
every word we speak
every hand we shake
every truth we seek
every prayer we make.
May God bless
this day and all days
our departing,
our travelling
and our returning.

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