

A Word on Wednesday - Letter from Pastor Tonia 4/20/22

Hallelujah, Christ Is Risen. He is Risen, Indeed. Hallelujah.

Beloved,

Happy Easter.

As we begin our journey through the season of Easter, we look around and see things in our world which disrupt our view of spring and hope. We see war, hunger, unexplainable acts hatred. There are so many instances of injustice we almost can't focus.

Today I, again, am focusing on an unexplainable act of war and I wonder what are we, as Church, doing about the situation in Ukraine? As I look at the response of faith communities to the war in Ukraine I God moving and using our hands for His work. We are praying, we are giving – time, money, and efforts, to support those who are hurting, those who've lost everything, those who stand in darkness, confusion, and pain. Those who are living a life they never imagined.

It is in times of crisis, I see how the ELCA stands to protect God's children in situations out of our control but under God's. God has not left His children, even though it looks like they have been deserted by all things good. As the people of Ukraine continue to fight for their country, continue to stand for the land they love, we support them in any way we can. We pray, some give, some go to volunteer – to feed and clothe, to shelter those in need.

We may not agree with everything the ELCA does, but we can stand with how they always step up to be Church in the world. With no fanfare, they are the first in and the last to leave anywhere there is need. Gifts given to ELCA Disaster Response, ELCA World Relief, ELCA World Hunger go 100% to the effort to which they are designated. We pray for God's work in places of hunger, war, and injustice, especially at this time of horror for God's children in Ukraine specifically and Eastern Europe in general.

Pastor Tonia

I am sharing this recent article on the ELCA and Lutheran Disaster Response efforts in Eastern Europe:

Eastern Europe Crisis Response

The Situation:

On Feb. 24, Russian forces invaded Ukraine, launching land, sea and air attacks. Russia has launched air strikes across the country, including on the capital of Kyiv and other major cities. Millions of people fleeing the violence of Russia's war against Ukraine and are moving toward Ukraine's western districts and such neighboring countries as Poland,

Moldova, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. There are major humanitarian concerns for both internally displaced people and refugees. Many of these Ukrainians fleeing their homes need shelter and such basic necessities as food, water and toiletries. Care for people also includes pastoral and psychological support to address the trauma they've endured.

Our Response:

Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying our companions in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as such ecumenical partners as this Lutheran World Federation and Church World Service, in their humanitarian responses to the crisis created by Russia's war against Ukraine. These partners provide refugees with immediate support and supplies such as food, blankets, water and hygiene kits. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has joined other religious leaders from Europe and around the globe in issuing an [interfaith call for peace](#) in the region.

What you can do:

Pray:

Please pray for those in Ukraine, Russia and neighboring countries that have been affected by the war in Ukraine. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need.

Give:

Your gifts designated for "[Eastern Europe Crisis Response](#)" will be used entirely (100%) to provide support for people impacted by conflict in the region.

Connect:

To learn more about the situation and the ELCA's response:

- Share this [bulletin insert](#) with your congregation and encourage support.
- Download this [worship resource](#) for use in your congregation.
- Sign up to receive Lutheran Disaster Response [alerts](#).
- Check the Lutheran Disaster Response [blog](#).
- "Like" Lutheran Disaster Response on [Facebook](#), follow @ELCALDR on [Twitter](#) and follow @ELCA_LDR on [Instagram](#).

Pray with me:

Merciful God, we pray for peace as war rages in Ukraine. Shelter all living in fear; protect those seeking refuge in neighboring countries; sustain families separated by the horrors of war; tend to those who are injured; comfort all who mourn their dead. Direct your people into the way of peace. In your mercy, **Amen**