

# Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

## 2nd March 2022

### War in Ukraine: Church Response

Russian president Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine and the responses of other countries and organisations in the world is filling our news screens and social media feeds. The loss of life and displacement of hundreds of thousands (potentially rising to millions) of refugees is shocking to see in a European country in the 21st century. The world is not a peaceful place: there are wars and humanitarian crises in many places, but the impact of Russia, a nuclear power, invading a European neighbour, using indiscriminate weapons on civilians and distorting their media and announcements to argue that this is for their own self-defence, feels beyond belief. Even *implied* threats of nuclear warfare make this Ukraine war something different and alarming.



Ukrainian flag in St Paul's Cathedral Dundee at Sunday night's vigil for peace

The economic sanctions being raised on Russia have exposed the reliance that so many other countries have on Russian oil and gas and the extent to which the global economy is vulnerable to this conflict—there is real fear that heating and fuel costs, already at historically high levels, may rise even further, putting vulnerable families in Europe and throughout the world in even worse situations. Ordinary Russians may suffer most.

This can feel overwhelming news, even as we are easing our way (we hope and pray) from the Covid pandemic.

What can churches do? There are appeals for money to assist with the immediate refugee crisis. These include:

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR):

<https://www.unrefugees.org.uk/where-help-is-needed/ukraine-situation/>

British Red Cross—working with local Red Crosses

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/international/ukraine>

There are also various local appeals to gather supplies that will help the refugees—check social media or the local press for where this might be possible in your area. In Dundee, St Luke's Café church are arranging a collection to be sent to Ukraine on Monday 7th March. Check their Facebook page for what is needed:

<https://www.facebook.com/cafechurchdundee>

And, of course, we should pray for Ukraine. Pope Francis has asked for today (Ash Wednesday) to be a day of prayer and fasting for the war in Ukraine to end. As Lent starts, as Christians and as Christian communities please, please pray for peace in Ukraine. Pray that world leaders, especially in Russia and their partners, accept their responsibility to promote peace and stop wars.

This situation can feel overwhelming for us all—so pray for strength and wisdom for yourself and for our churches to be signs of God's light and love as this crisis develops and grows.

### Diocesan Synod 2022: Could You Fill Any 'Situations Vacant'?

Diocesan Synod is being held 'in-person' at St Mary's Broughty Ferry this coming Saturday. A key area of business is electing people to posts in the Diocese and the Province. It is so important that charges are represented in the Diocese and the Diocese is represented in the Province. This year there will be elections for all of the **Diocesan representatives at General Synod: 6 lay and 6 clergy members**. Some of those previously serving are eligible to stand again, but we need new people willing to come and serve for a new four year term. There are also **vacancies on Diocesan Council for one clergy and two lay members**. Some of the previous members can serve again: but we do need new people willing to stand. A full list of the posts that require to be filled is on the [Diocesan website](#). Please do consider if you might be able to serve in this important way!

Contact the office for a nomination form or for any other information on how to stand.

Please also pray for the Synod—that it will be a time of sharing hope and making good decisions that will build up our church communities.

## **Covid Guidance: Change Coming**

As reported last week, we understand that (subject to Covid variants, detailed government guidance etc.) on 21st March the legal requirement to wear masks in churches will be removed, and the guidance on restrictions on how we meet and worship will be softened.

The SEC Advisory Group and the Bishops will provide guidance on how a church might manage relaxations so that as things change it happens at a pace that will be slow enough to feel safe but fast enough for those who are keen for 'normal' life. The pandemic is still with us, so there remains need for care and clear communication. The details of relaxations are still being developed by the government: watch for GSO emails for news.

## **Bishop's Lent Appeal**

Bishop Andrew's Lent Appeal this year will be equally shared between two areas that urgently need support in 2022. As in previous years, there will be 'global' and 'local' elements.

The 'global' half will be donated to our ongoing projects in the Diocese of Swaziland, where Covid-19 and ongoing civil unrest have made a fragile society even more vulnerable. The help that Companion Dioceses Iowa and Brechin give to projects such as the 'Neighbourhood Care Points' (NCPs) in Eswatini makes a massive difference in food and care for vulnerable children and families throughout the country. <http://www.thedioceseofbrechin.org/groups/swaziland/>

The 'local' share of the appeal will be donated to 'Energy Action Scotland' - a charity working to end fuel poverty in Scotland. The current UK situation with soaring fuel prices and rising costs of living is making many vulnerable people's situations unbearable. From EAS's website: "EAS aims to develop and promote effective solutions to the problem of cold, damp and expensive to heat homes." <https://www.eas.org.uk/>

## **Some Lent Resources...**

The Scottish Episcopal Institute is offering an online Lent Course: 'Episcopalians and Their Ethics: A six-part series in Lent 2022'.

The Series is offered on the six Mondays of Lent in 30 minute webinars, each of which will be available on YouTube. The Series serves as a resource to be used creatively during the Lent, for example as a refresher

course for individuals or a discussion starter for a church group.

Time: 7pm to 7.30pm on Monday evenings in Lent 2022. Registration free. All welcome. Register [here](#).

- 7 Mar: What is Christian ethics?
- 14 Mar: Why should I choose good over evil?
- 21 Mar: How do I tell good from evil?
- 28 Mar: What is conscience?
- 4 Apr: Why follow conscience?
- 11 Apr: Where do I go with Christian ethics?

Church Army have developed a Lent Resource to give you, your small group and your church space and time each day throughout Lent to listen to God, reflect on the Bible, and see how and where you can listen to His leading in your actions and attitudes. Each pack contains 40 beautiful cards divided into Action Cards, Character Cards, and Reflection Cards and Marks of Mission Cards. Available as both free email reflections or as a stunning pack of cards from <https://churcharmy.org/growing-faith/lent-2/>

## **"The Great Holy Work"**

Why build a church on the Castle Hill, Dundee? Dr Aileen Black, historian and Cathedral member, will help us explore the Cathedral, its artworks and memorials that tell its story.

A Friends of St Paul 's Cathedral Dundee event, on Saturday 12th March, 3.00 - 5.00 pm - with tea and cake. All welcome. For catering numbers, it helps if you can say you'll be there:

email [friends@saintpaulscathedral.net](mailto:friends@saintpaulscathedral.net)

## **Online Worship for the SEC**

The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer 'national' worship online every week. A Sunday service, each from one of the Dioceses, is continuing in the form of a service broadcast at 11am each Sunday. This will continue beyond the pandemic. There are more details of each week's services at:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

## **Any news to share in the Bulletin?**

If you have stories and photos of events around the diocese, we would love to share these in the bulletin.

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