



# NORDIC AND BALTIC EPISCOPAL AREA

## THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

---

BISHOP CHRISTIAN ALSTED

---

Copenhagen 24. February 2022

Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Norway  
Sweden

### Pastoral letter in light of the tragic events in Ukraine

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27*

There is war in Europe, Russia has invaded Ukraine, which is a free independent democracy. War and violence are evil and always entail considerable human costs. The Christian message points to the path of reconciliation and never to war and violence, as a solution to conflicts. In the face of this evil, we pray for a logic different from the one based on geopolitical competition. We pray for a change of hearts and minds of leaders, we pray for de-escalation and dialogue instead of violence and war.

The Social Principles of the Methodist Church say: “We deplore war and urge the peaceful settlement of all disputes among nations. From the beginning, the Christian conscience has struggled with the harsh realities of violence and war, for these evils clearly frustrate God’s loving purposes for humankind. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.

Our central conference consists of Nordic, Baltic and Eurasian countries, including Russia and Ukraine. The Christian Church is not nationalistic and our relations with our brothers and sisters in other countries are not limited by nationality or culture. We have deep relations with Methodists in Ukraine and in Russia, and although we are influenced by our culture and the political realities, we must never allow this to hinder or break our unity in Christ.

We stand with the United Methodists in Ukraine in prayer for protection, reconciliation and peace. We pray for pastors, leaders and congregations in the United Methodist Church in Ukraine; may God grant that their witness of reconciliation and peace will bring strength and hope to the Ukrainian people.

We pray for Bishop Eduard Khegay, bishop of both Russia and Ukraine, may God give him the wisdom and grace that he needs in his ministry and leadership under these challenging circumstances.





NORDIC AND BALTIC EPISCOPAL AREA  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

---

BISHOP CHRISTIAN ALSTED

---

Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Norway  
Sweden

In the Nordic and Baltic episcopal area, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania all have borders with Russia, and in addition Latvia and Lithuania have borders with Belarus. In the Baltic states in particular, the invasion of Ukraine causes great concern.

The United Methodists in the Nordic countries stand with the Methodists in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in prayer for protection and peace. May the Church's testimony of reconciliation and peace in Christ offer hope and strength to the people in the Baltic countries.

In the coming week we will enter the season of Lent, which in the church is a time for prayer and soul-searching. I call on all our congregations to intercede for the people of Ukraine, and for the leaders in the world, who have the power to bring an end to war. I call on all our congregations to pray and fast for reconciliation and peace in the world. May God, in his grace, open our eyes to the things that make for peace, may He protect us all from the escalation and spreading of war, and may we follow Him on His path of truth and peace.

May Christ have mercy on us all

Christian Alsted

