



# First Congregational Church of Lebanon

*United Church of Christ – Open and Affirming*

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## A Prayer Service for Ukraine

March 22, 2022

“There is no mediating between good and evil.”

—Volodymyr Zelensky

*Please silence cell phones and other devices. Masks are required throughout the service.*

*\*Those who are able are invited to stand. All hymns are included within the order of service.*

**Prelude**

Adagio from Sonata in C

Dmitry Bortniansky

**Call to Worship**

Psalm 31

Leader: In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.

**People: Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.**

Leader: You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

**People: Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God. You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the Lord.**

Leader: I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have taken heed of my adversities, and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.

**People: Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.**

Leader: I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbours, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.

**People: For I hear the whispering of many—terror all around!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.**

Leader: But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

**People: Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. Do not let me be put to shame, O Lord, for I call on you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go dumbfounded to Sheol. Let the lying lips be stilled that speak insolently against the righteous with pride and contempt.**

Leader: O how abundant is your goodness that you have laid up for those who fear you, and accomplished for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of everyone! In the shelter of your presence you hide them from human plots; you hold them safe under your shelter from contentious tongues.

People: Blessed be the Lord, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was beset as a city under siege. I had said in my alarm, "I am driven far from your sight." But you heard my supplications when I cried out to you for help.

All: Love the Lord, all you his saints. The Lord preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.

\*Hymn 413 (p. 3)      By Gracious Powers

Bonhoeffer

## A Word of Welcome

### Congregational Prayer (Unison)

*The following prayer was offered by Pope Francis earlier in the Russia-Ukraine War.*

Forgive us for war, O Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners!

Lord Jesus, born in the shadows of bombs falling on Kyiv, have mercy on us!

Lord Jesus, who died in a mother's arms in a bunker in Kharkiv, have mercy on us!

Lord Jesus, a 20-year-old sent to the front lines, have mercy on us!

Lord Jesus, who still behold armed hands in the shadow of your Cross, have mercy on us!

Forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us, if we are not satisfied with the nails with which we crucified Your hands, as we continue to slate our thirst with the blood of those mauled by weapons.

Forgive us, if these hands which You created to tend have been transformed into instruments of death.

Forgive us, O Lord, if we continue to kill our brother;

Forgive us, if we continue like Cain to pick up the stones of our fields to kill Abel.

Forgive us, if we continue to justify our cruelty with our labors, if we legitimize the brutality of our actions with our pain.

Forgive us for war, O Lord. Forgive us for war, O Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, we implore You! Hold fast the hand of Cain!

Illumine our consciences;

May our will not be done;

Abandon us not to our own actions!

Stop us, O Lord, stop us!

And when you have held back the hand of Cain, care also for him. He is our brother.

O Lord, put a halt to the violence!

Stop us, O Lord!

Amen.

## By Gracious Powers

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1944  
 Transl. Fred Pratt Green, 1972

Unison

1 By gra-cious powers so won-der - ful - ly shel-tered,  
 2 Yet is this heart by its old foe tor-ment-ed,  
 3 And when this cup you give is filled to brim-ming  
 4 Yet when a - gain in this same world you give us

and con - fi - dent - ly wait - ing, come what may,  
 still e - vil days bring bur - dens hard to bear;  
 with bit - ter sor - row, hard to un - der - stand,  
 the joy we had, the bright-ness of your sun,

We know that God is with us night and morn - ing,  
 O give our fright - ened souls the sure sal - va - tion  
 We take it thank - ful - ly and with-out trem - bling,  
 We shall re - mem - ber all the days we lived through,

and nev - er fails to greet us each new day.  
 for which, O God, you taught us to pre - pare.  
 out of so good and so be - loved a hand.  
 and our whole life shall then be yours a - lone.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, professor, and leader of the German Opposition, composed the poem on which this hymn is based, "New Year 1945," while imprisoned by the Gestapo in Berlin. Four months later, Bonhoeffer was executed by special order of Himmler.*

Tune: BONHOEFFER 11.10.11.10.  
 Herbert G. Hobbs, 1976  
 Harm. Jan Helmut Wubben, 1976

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## Two Prayers for Ukraine

*The following prayer was written by Ukrainian poet and activist Oleksandr Konysky (1836-1900).*

O Lord, the Great and Almighty,

Protect your beloved Ukraine, bless her with freedom and light of your holy rays.

With learning and knowledge enlighten us, your children small, in love pure and everlasting, let us, O Lord, grow.

We pray, O Lord Almighty, protect your beloved Ukraine, grant its people and country all your kindness and grace.

Bless them with freedom, bless them with wisdom, guide all into a kind world. Bless us, O Lord, with good fortune for ever and evermore.

*The following prayer comes from an anonymous Ukrainian woman, a refugee whose family remains in Russian-occupied territory. (Originally published in the New York Times, 3/13/22.)*

Father-God, may the attackers' fingers freeze; may they drop things; may they not see clearly; may their equipment malfunction; may they experience overwhelming hopelessness, enormous fatigue and a complete loss of any desire to fight; may their communication be broken; may there be confusion. Lead them to surrender. Stretch the kilometers before them into endless kilometers of nonadvancement. Remove their leadership and replace them with people who make decisions that reflect a fear of you.

O God, infuse defenders with incredible surges of renewed alertness, strength, hope, courage. Inspire those who want to help. Show them specific, effective ideas. Move them swiftly and safely.

The worst is yet to come, Lord, if you do not stop it. But please, no peace where there is no peace. We ask for peace united with righteousness and truth.

God of all comfort, be physically present with all the mothers, fathers, grandparents and children who are hiding, hearing, smelling, enduring. Warm them; fill them with food; give them water, toilets, communication with their loved ones, the Gospel, hope in you.

We repent of making idols of political leaders and news outlets. Forgive us for wanting them to be our gods and saviors. Forgive us for being unreasonable, for not wanting to admit both the good and bad in all of our leaders. It is this spirit that leads us to dictators because we abandon responsibility and reason. We confess the seeds of war that live in our own hearts.

We humble our hearts, our bodies. We ask you for mercy. Thank you that you love mercy and have all power.

**\*Hymn 50** (p. 5)      *I Sing the Praise of Love Almighty*

St. Petersburg

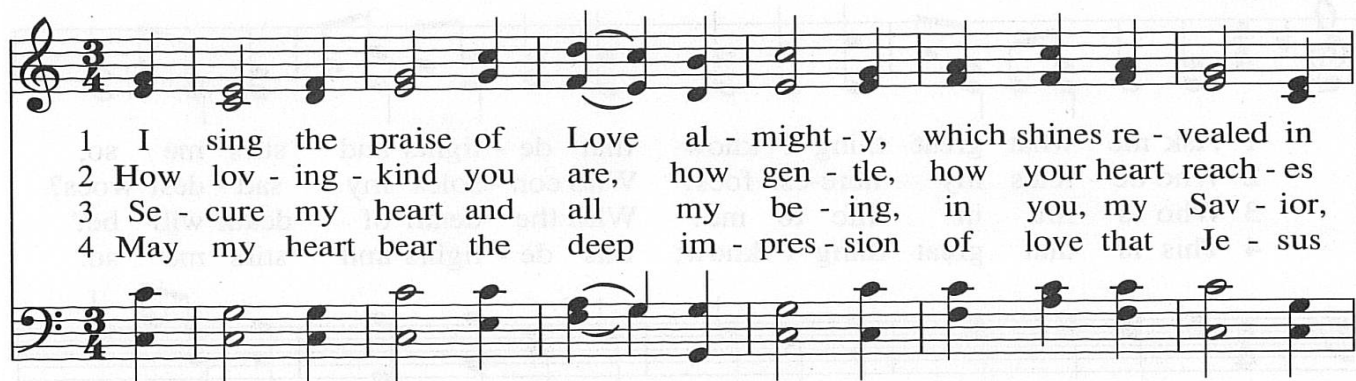
## Scripture Lessons

**Deuteronomy 7:17-19.** <sup>17</sup>If you say to yourself, "These nations are more numerous than I; how can I dispossess them?" <sup>18</sup>do not be afraid of them. Just remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, <sup>19</sup>the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and wonders,

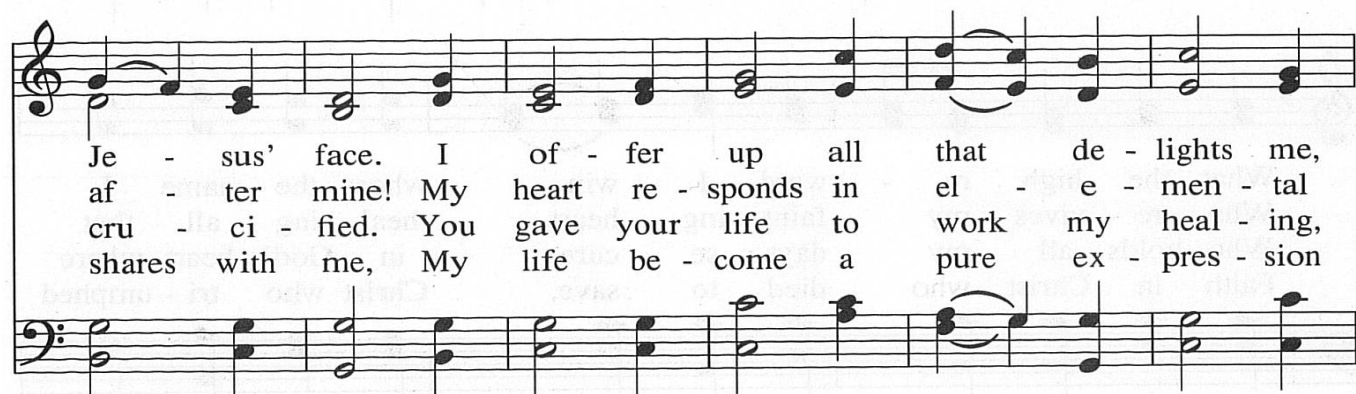
## I Sing the Praise of Love Almighty

Gerhard Tersteegen, 1757

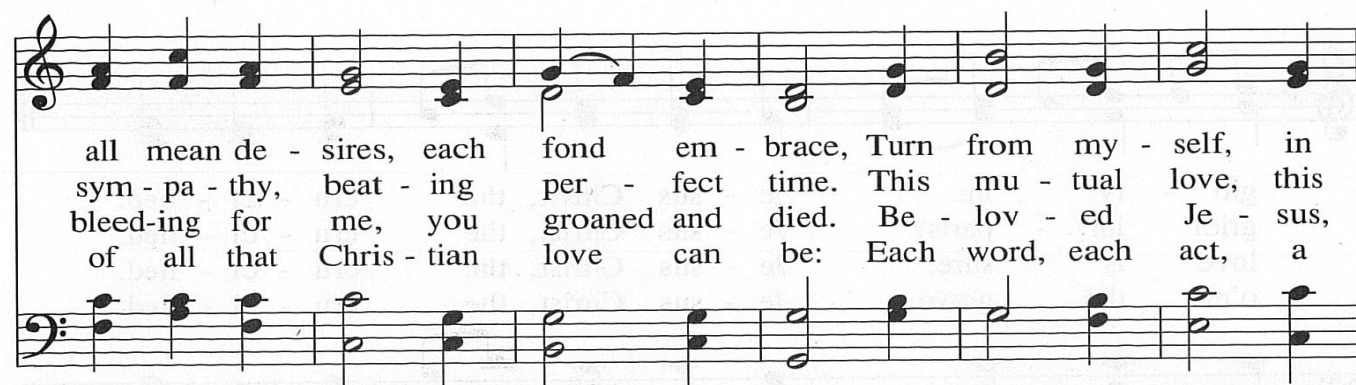
Transl. Madeleine Forell Marshall, 1993



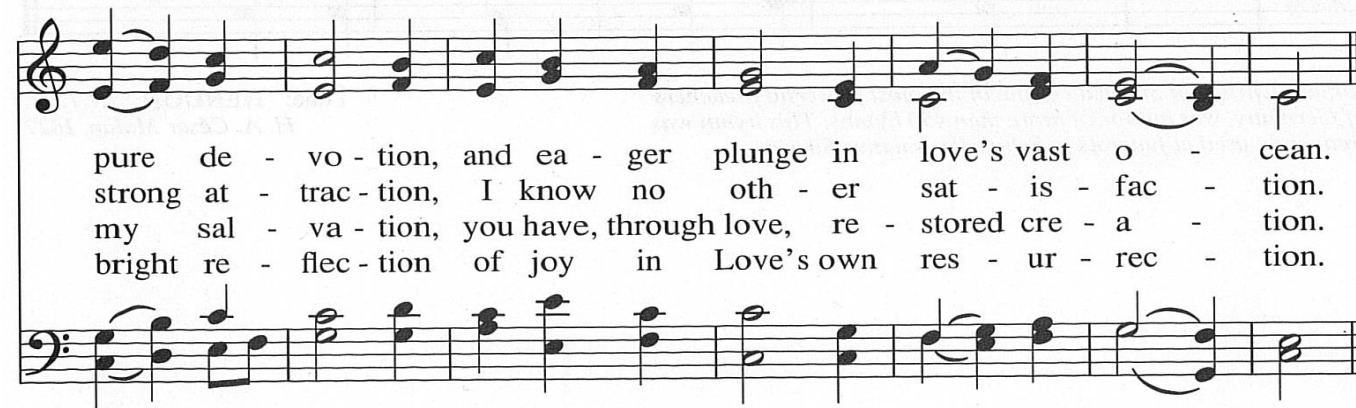
1 I sing the praise of Love al - might - y, which shines re - vealed in  
 2 How lov - ing - kind you are, how gen - tle, how your heart reach - es  
 3 Se - cure my heart and all my be - ing, in you, my Sav - ior,  
 4 May my heart bear the deep im - pres - sion of love that Je - sus



Je - sus' face. I of - fer up all that de - lights me,  
 af - ter mine! My heart re - sponds in el - e - men - tal  
 cru - ci - fied. You gave your life to work my heal - ing,  
 shares with me, My life be - come a pure ex - pres - sion



all mean de - sires, each fond em - brace, Turn from my - self, in  
 sym - pa - thy, beat - ing per - fect time. This mu - tual love, this  
 bleed - ing for me, you groaned and died. Be - lov - ed Je - sus,  
 of all that Chris - tian love can be: Each word, each act, a



pure de - vo - tion, and ea - ger plunge in love's vast o - cean.  
 strong at - trac - tion, I know no oth - er sat - is - fac - tion.  
 my sal - va - tion, you have, through love, re - stored cre - a - tion.  
 bright re - flec - tion of joy in Love's own res - ur - rec - tion.

*Gerhard Tersteegen was an eighteenth-century hymnwriter and mystic, nurtured in the German Reformed Church. The four stanzas that comprise "Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe" were drawn from a longer poem and became popular in this form when published by Pastor Johannes Evangelist Gossner in his Choralbuch of 1825.*

Tune: ST. PETERSBURG 9.8.9.8.9.9.  
 Dimitri Bortniansky, 1825

**Lamentations 1:1-3.** <sup>1</sup>How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal. <sup>2</sup>She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies. <sup>3</sup>Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude; she lives now among the nations, and finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

## Meditation

Stephen R. Silver

## Pastoral Prayer

*We offer now the following prayer from the Orthodox tradition:*

Lord Our God, great and almighty, we your sinful children turn to you with humility in our hearts and bow our heads low before you. We beseech your loving kindness and abundant blessings upon the nation—the people—of Ukraine during these days of great danger to their safety and well-being.

Our brothers and sisters, Lord, are once again threatened by aggressors who see them only as simple obstacles blocking the path to the complete domination of the precious land and resources of the country of Ukraine. Strengthen the people as they face this great danger, turning to you in the immeasurably deep faith, trust, and love they have placed in you, all their lives. Send your heavenly legions, O Lord, commanded by the patron of Kyiv, archangel Michael, to crush the desires of the aggressor whose desire is to eradicate your people.

Grant unity of mind, heart, and soul, O Lord, to all leaders in public service with those they serve. Unite them all into one, great Christian family, so that together, as brothers and sisters, they may glorify your majestic name—God in the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## The Lord's Prayer (Unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## Offering of Gifts

*There are numerous options for supporting those who are suffering through the war in Ukraine. Tonight's offering will be forwarded to the United Church of Christ, which is providing refugee assistance both as a member of the ACT Alliance and through the Reformed Church in Hungary. Please make checks payable to FCC-Lebanon (memo "Ukraine Relief"); FCC will send the total to the UCC. For more information or to donate online, please visit [www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal/](http://www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal/).*

## Offertory

Grant Us Peace, O Lord

Felix Mendelssohn

## \*Doxology (Unison)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,

Praise God, all creatures here below,  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**\*Prayer of Dedication (Unison)**

Lord of Creation, inspired by your grace, humbled by this Lenten season of repentance, grateful for all you have done, do, and will do through Jesus, we respond with this evening's offering. In our Savior's name we pray, Amen.

**\*A Reading from the Psalter (Unison)**

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

**\*Hymn 52** (p. 8)      *Now, on Land and Sea Descending*

Vesper Hymn

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Ukrainian National Anthem*

Mykhailo Verbytsky

The glorious spirit of Ukraine shines and lives forever. Blessed by Fortune, brotherhood will stand up together. Like dew before the sun, our enemies will fade. We will rule and prosper in our promised land. We will sacrifice soul and body for our cherished freedom. On Kozak blood will rise the nation of the joyous people. (*Pavlo Chubynsky*)

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*Much of tonight's music is by Ukrainian-born composer Dmitry Bortniansky (1751-1825), who served the court of Catherine the Great. To this day, both Ukraine and Russia celebrate him as a national musical hero.*

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***Leading This Evening's Service***

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor • Ernie Drown, Organ/Piano • The FCC Choir  
Members of the Diaconate, Ushers

**First Congregational Church of Lebanon**

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Nancy Parsons, Children's Community Corner  
Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • Barbara Jones, Moderator  
Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

*Church Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9:00-12:00 (or by appointment as needed)*

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## Now, on Land and Sea Descending

Samuel Longfellow, 1819-1892, alt.


VESPER HYMN 8.7.8.7.8.6.8.7.

Attr. to Dmitri S. Bortniansky, 1751-1825

Arr. by John A. Stevenson, 1761-1833




1 Now, on land and sea de-scend-ing, Brings the night its peace pro-found;  
 2 Soon as dies the sun - set glo - ry, Stars of heavn shine out a - bove,  
 3 As the dark-ness deep-ens o'er us, Lo! e - ter - nal stars a - rise;



Let our ves-per hymn be blend-ing With the ho - ly calm a-round.  
 Tell - ing still the an - cient sto - ry, Their Cre - a - tor's change-less love.  
 Hope and faith and love rise glo-rious, Shin - ing in the spir-it's skies.



Ju - bi - la - te! Ju - bi - la - te! Ju - bi - la - te! A - men!



Let our ves-per hymn be blend-ing With the ho - ly calm a-round.  
 Tell - ing still the an - cient sto - ry Their Cre - a - tor's change-less love.  
 Hope and faith and love rise glo-rious, Shin-ing in the spir-it's skies. A-men