

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

16th March 2022

War in Ukraine: Church Response

The dreadful war continuing in Ukraine dominates the news and thoughts and prayers of people throughout the world. As Russian military destruction of major cities spreads throughout that country, three million refugees have now fled to neighbouring countries. This is being described as the fastest growing refugee crisis since the Second World War and it shows no sign of easing.

The overwhelming news of warfare and destruction and the cost in innocent lives lost and displaced continue to demand Christian responses. The whole situation is politically complex: there are many areas to consider, some of which are discussed below.



Ukrainian flag in St Paul's Cathedral at a vigil for peace

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR—a multi-faith partnership including the SEC) has some guidance for any church or individual: <http://www.sfar.org.uk/7-things-you-can-do-to-respond-to-the-situation-in-ukraine/>. Some of these are described below:

Donate

The most direct and immediate way to support Ukrainian refugees is to donate money to the major appeals helping in the area. Please continue to support agencies helping the refugees. SFAR has some smaller options. Bigger appeals include:

The UK Disasters Emergency Committee (an umbrella appeal for [major UK aid charities](#)). Donate personally or with any church collections at:

<https://donation.dec.org.uk/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal>

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), also heavily involved in local aid activities for Ukraine:

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

Some churches are arranging fundraising events (e.g. [St Mary Magdalene Dundee Coffee Morning](#)—26th March) - follow links above for details.

Pray for Peace

And, of course, 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. Churches are continuing to hold services/vigils to offer prayer and comfort (e.g. Brechin Churches Together in [St Andrew's Brechin](#)—18th March).

Refugee support: lobby to improve

The UK response to refugees from Ukraine is changing, maybe somewhat slowly, and new schemes are coming online for refugees to gain visa-based access to safety in the UK.

The 'Ukraine Family Scheme' <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa> allows Ukrainians with family already resident in the UK to join them. This scheme, which has been changing rapidly, has been criticised by many agencies including the SEC for being too bureaucratic and limited. <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/primus-calls-for-swifter-action-to-help-ukraine-refugees-reach-uk/>.

Please continue to contact MPs to ensure that schemes are administered safely and fairly at UK, devolved and local levels.

Individuals/Churches—engage with developing UK schemes for refugees?

A new UK Govt 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/> has been launched this week to let UK citizens offer rooms or properties for Ukrainian citizens. The scheme has been widely reported in the press: six months' minimum commitment is needed, and there are government payments planned for hosts. This scheme (as of 15/3) will allow a UK citizen who is already connected with a Ukrainian refugee to work with them for visa application to come and remain in the UK. For other individuals or churches/charities etc. who wish to offer accommodation in the future, the UK government allow interest to be registered while

work takes place on e.g. safe systems to manage the 'matching' of refugees to possible hosts, involvement of local authorities etc. As churches we are concerned that safeguarding is handled properly in any scheme. This is a fast developing area: watch for church guidance on safe and effective ways to respond directly for refugee support which the Diocese will aim to 'signpost' as it becomes available.

SEC: Towards Net Zero 2030: Toolkit and Checklist Launched This Week



Following the affirmation by the General Synod in 2020 that the Scottish Episcopal Church should commit to working towards Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030, the Provincial Environment Group (PEG) is pleased to announce the publication of a suite of tools to help congregations work towards this goal.

Taking the 10 points of guidance produced by the Church in Society Technical Committee as its starting point Towards Net Zero 2030 comprises a Toolkit and Checklist working document and an Energy Footprint Analyser. These tools are designed to guide churches through the process of identifying their current energy footprint, identifying opportunities to make meaningful changes, and prioritising those within the local context.

The toolkit and the energy footprint analyser are available at the SEC website <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/towards-net-zero-2030-toolkit-checklist-and-energy-footprint-analyser-published/>.

The Diocesan Environmental Group plans to support and guide charges in the Diocese on application and use of this extensive material. Watch this space!

SEI Lent Course Online

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?*

Remaining Sessions

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?*

Second Anniversary of Lockdown "Letting Go and Looking Forward" 23rd March, 7.30pm in the Cathedral

A service will be held at 7.30pm in the Cathedral in Dundee to mark the second anniversary of the 2020 lockdown. 'Letting Go & Looking Forward' is an opportunity for an ecumenical service led by Dundee city centre churches. This will be a gathering for everyone, an invitation to recognise what people have been through, a chance to reflect with music, prayer, and stillness, and a moment to renew our commitment to working together for the common good in a still uncertain future. People will be invited to tell their stories of experience during the pandemic - in the health service, in reorganising food banks, in locked-down daily life - capturing the breadth and depth of this shared experience.

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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