

A letter from the Board of the Estonian Council of Churches to the fellow believers in Ukraine

The Son of Man says: *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”* (Matthew 25:34)

In the early hours in the morning of the Independence Day of the Republic of Estonia, February 24, 2022, Russia attacked its neighboring country, Ukraine. The word “war” entered our daily vocabulary. For three years now, we have been witnessing how love is being killed in this war. Russia’s war of conquest against the state and people of Ukraine is, without any concessions, a crime and a sin. We are convinced that God cannot side with the killers of love and the blessers of this war.

According to the Christian faith, love always wins. This means that all wars also end. As long as the Russian war in Ukraine is not over and the expected peace has not yet come, we in Estonian churches will continue to pray for the survival of the Ukrainian state and people and for the achievement of a just peace. We also pray that the Prince of Peace, Jesus, would give wisdom to those who begin to negotiate the conditions for achieving peace and make efforts to do so. We also pray that when concluding peace agreements, the independence of people and the state would not be treated carelessly, as has happened before in history. We also include in our prayers all those who defend the freedom of Ukraine and remember those who have given their lives in the name of a just peace.

Dear brothers and sisters in Ukraine! We thank you for your love of serving your neighbor and for remaining steadfast in your faith! Just as Christ was present where he was needed most, you, as representatives of your churches, are following Jesus' example in serving your people and society at a time when the need for help is the greatest. Your example also inspires us in Estonia to contribute more to serving our neighbor and encourages us to always trust in God in everything.

In Jesus’ parable of the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25, all nations are divided into two as they stand before the throne of the glory of the Son of Man. Those who have done God’s will receive just judgment, as will those who have done only their own. The Lord declares to those who have acted according to God’s will: *“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”* (Matthew 25:34) To all who are slaves to their sinful will and have turned their backs on their neighbor and thus on Christ, the Lord says: *“Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”* (Matthew 25:41).

May the just God of all nations give you the strength to serve his people until God's solution comes. We are with you in this struggle with our prayers and together with you we place our hope in the Lord, who will have the final say in all things.

In the name of The Estonian Council of Churches

President, archbishop Urmas Viilma, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Vice president, bishop Philippe Jourdan, Roman Catholic Church in Estonia

Vice president, pastor Erki Tamm, Estonian Evangelical Christians’ and Baptist Union

Tallinn 23rd of February 2025