

## **HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 2/25/2022**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Russia's invasion of the Ukraine has horrified many throughout the world. The result of this attack will be terrible suffering and widespread difficulties in the Ukraine and in other nearby countries. Even here, nearly halfway around the world, there will be effects that will impact our lives, both short-term and perhaps in the long-run. It is a sad and heartbreaking situation.

In this time, we may find ourselves feeling helpless and frustrated. We may also be anxious and distressed. Just as things seem to be coming under control with the pandemic, this new crisis has risen in our world. We wonder what the future may hold in a more urgent way now.

Is there anything we can do? Indeed, I think there is. First, we can pray. Pray for the people of the Ukraine, for their safety and for the support of the world for them. Pray for the leaders of our nations that they might find effective ways to work for peace and justice for all people in the world. Pray for those who are directly involved in providing care for those who are struggling. Ask God to provide the needed assistance through the many humanitarian agencies that seek to intervene.

Second, we can consider supporting these agencies as a way of our assistance. For example, gifts to Lutheran World Relief ([lwr.org/helpnow](http://lwr.org/helpnow)) will help to provide food, clean water, safe shelter, medical supplies, and much more. We may not be able to directly assist those in need, but we can thank God and show our solidarity for efforts that respond to situations such as these.

Most of all, we can continue to trust God and know that in the midst of all that is happening, God is present. God never promised that there wouldn't be challenges and difficulties in our lives, but God did promise to be with us in the midst of these. How we live among others today, how we treat each other can set an example that might spread and lead to God-driven changes in our families, neighborhoods, and ultimately, the world.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey