

Life is inching closer to what might feel like normal. Well, sort of. Or at least it was until war broke out in Ukraine. Russia now seems intent on invading and killing until they gain the control they want. The images and stories coming out of Ukraine are so sad, so frustrating. I wish it could just end...now. I wish no one else would be hurt or killed. I wish somehow the president of Russia (I refuse to speak his name) would suddenly come to his senses and realize the harm he is senselessly causing. Oh, God, make it stop.

The thing is that is not how God works. And at times, times like this, an autocratic dictator choosing to use power to increase *his* power with no regard to human suffering is both hard to understand and difficult to tolerate. That is when we turn to God and trust those with the training and skill God has gifted them with, to stop the assault. It may not stop quickly. Many will be injured and there will be many lives loss. God will be with us all in the struggle. May we move closer to God, and be comforted by God's tangible presence.

Today, I share with you a favorite theologian and author, Walter Brueggemann, author of *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*. His collection of prayerful poems, or poetic prayers, if you prefer are always helpful to me.

Larger Than Fear

*We do not really know about running and hiding.
We do not have any real sense, ourselves, of being under assault,
for we live privileged, safe lives,
learning in a garden near paradise.
Nonetheless the fear and the prayer
live close beneath the surface...
enemies we cannot see,
old threats lingering unresolved from childhood,
wild stirrings in the night we cannot control.
And then we line out our imperative petitions,
frantic...at least anxious;
fearful...at least bewildered;
Turning to you, only you, you...nowhere else.
In the midst of our anxiety, confidence wells up,
In our present stress, old well-being echoes.
We speak and the world turns confident and grateful,
not because we believe our own words,
but because of your presence,
your powerful, bold, reliable presence
looms large,
larger than fear,
larger than anxiety,
large enough...and in our small vulnerability,
we give thanks.
Amen.*

May we understand we have enough.
It is not about us or our leaders.
It is not about them or their leaders.
God will be with us...
That is enough.

Stumbling forward, hoping for grace,
In Christ's love,
Barb.