

Children praying for children



JUNE 1, 2025

UNITE IN PRAYER FOR UKRAINE'S CHILDREN



LAST YEAR, COMMUNITIES ACROSS AMERICA JOINED IN PRAYER FOR UKRAINE'S CHILDREN.



Children Praying for Children was launched in 2024, this campaign seeks to unify our communities in raising awareness about the war's impact on Ukrainian children.

The mission is:

- to create a sacred space where children can come together in prayer, solidarity, and compassionate action.
- Spotlight the plight of children abducted by Russian government from occupied territories.

THIS JUNE 1ST, ON INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY, WE INVITE YOU TO BE PART OF THIS POWERFUL MOVEMENT ONCE AGAIN.



Please Scan our QR code to sign up!



Children praying for children



Re: Children Praying for Children June 1, 2025

Dear Soyuzianky,

The Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) continues its century-long tradition of advocating for Ukrainian children and uniting communities in support of Ukraine.

As part of our Return Ukraine's Children initiative, we invite all members to organize Children Praying for Children services across the U.S. on International Children's Day — June 1, 2025.

These services will bring children together in prayer and solidarity for Ukrainian children affected by war— especially the over 20,000 who have been abducted by Russia from temporarily occupied territories.

The goal is to raise awareness of this tragedy and inspire support for efforts to return these children to their loving families. Your participation will help shine a light on their plight and continue UNWLA's legacy of action and compassion.

Attached are materials which we hope will make it easier for you to organize the Children Praying for Children service (s) in your community:

- A media Advisory for your own use or to be shared with other organizations with whom you are working
- Guidelines for organizing the prayer service
- Fact sheet for reference
- A template for use as a flyer for handouts, social media posting or emails
- Faith communities outreach letter (template)

Together we can ensure that the Children Praying for Children prayer service is a meaningful and respectful event bringing together children and our communities in prayer and awareness of the tragedy.

*Respectfully yours,
Christina Tershakovec,
UNWLA Advocacy National Chair*

*Marta Fedoriw,
Chair of the UNWLA Return Ukraine's Children Initiative*



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

Children praying for children



MARKING INTERNATIONAL CHILDRENS DAY – JUNE 1, 2025

The following guidelines are designed to help organizers plan and carry out the Children Praying for Children national campaign. This initiative aims to unite communities of faith in support of Ukrainian children affected by war — especially those abducted by Russia from temporarily occupied territories.

As 2025 brings renewed momentum from the U.S. administration toward peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, we have an opportunity to ensure that children are not forgotten and left behind. By encouraging broad participation from faith communities, we can show unified support from neighbors and friends across the country.

To support your efforts, team of the Return Ukraine's Children initiative has developed two suggested formats for organizing your event:

Scenario 1: Public Interfaith Event

- Choose a public location in your city for an interfaith prayer service.
- Reach out to local faith communities and invite their leaders and members to join the service, offer prayers, or speak in support of Ukrainian children.
- Contact your local interfaith council to help coordinate and promote the event.
- Share photos and a short paragraph about the event. With permission of participants, gather the information and share it with your local media to demonstrate support for Ukrainian children from the American people.

Scenario 2: Decentralized Faith Community Events

- Partner with your own faith community to host a dedicated prayer event.
- Encourage other religious communities in your area to hold similar services for Ukrainian children and to pray for the safe return of abducted and displaced youth.
- Ask participants to share with you a photo and a short paragraph about their event. With their permission, compile and send this to local media to showcase public support for Ukrainian children.

In both scenarios, build your event around the participation of local children to strengthen the connection to the cause.



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MARKING INTERNATIONAL CHILDRENS DAY – JUNE 1, 2025

IMPORTANT TIPS

- Engage your local Ukrainian school to participate in the event.
- If your event cannot be held on June 1, 2025, please schedule it as close to that date as possible. Be sure to note that it is in observance of International Children's Day.
- Media outreach is critical. Contact local newspapers, TV, and radio stations to announce and cover the event. Use the press release, fact sheet, and other materials provided in this toolkit.

Pro tip: Media outlets appreciate human interest stories. If possible, introduce a local Ukrainian refugee — especially someone who arrived to the U.S. with a child and can speak to their personal experience during the war in Ukraine.

- Invite local elected officials to attend and show their support.

Optional Post-Service Activities for Children:

- Have children draw cards or make small arts & crafts to send to children in Ukraine.
- Create a map of Ukraine with a net overlay and have children tie prayer ribbons to it.
- Give children crayons, markers or chalk and ask them to draw pictures for Ukrainian children, as our community in Florida did last year.

These engaging activities give children a sense of involvement, add visual interest, and are great for photo and video opportunities.



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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FOR UNWLA BRANCHES THAT DO NOT HAVE A UKRAINIAN SATURDAY SCHOOL

STEP #1/ Reach out to a parish in your community to hold a prayer service on June 1, 2025.

If there is more than one parish in your community, coordinate with them to hold the prayer service in one church for all to attend together. Include the representatives of all the churches and invite leaders of all faiths to attend.

Reach out to the Inter-Faith Council in your area to take part.

Inter-Faith outreach is very important as it not only unites us in prayer but also highlights that Ukraine is multi-religious society which respects religious freedom.

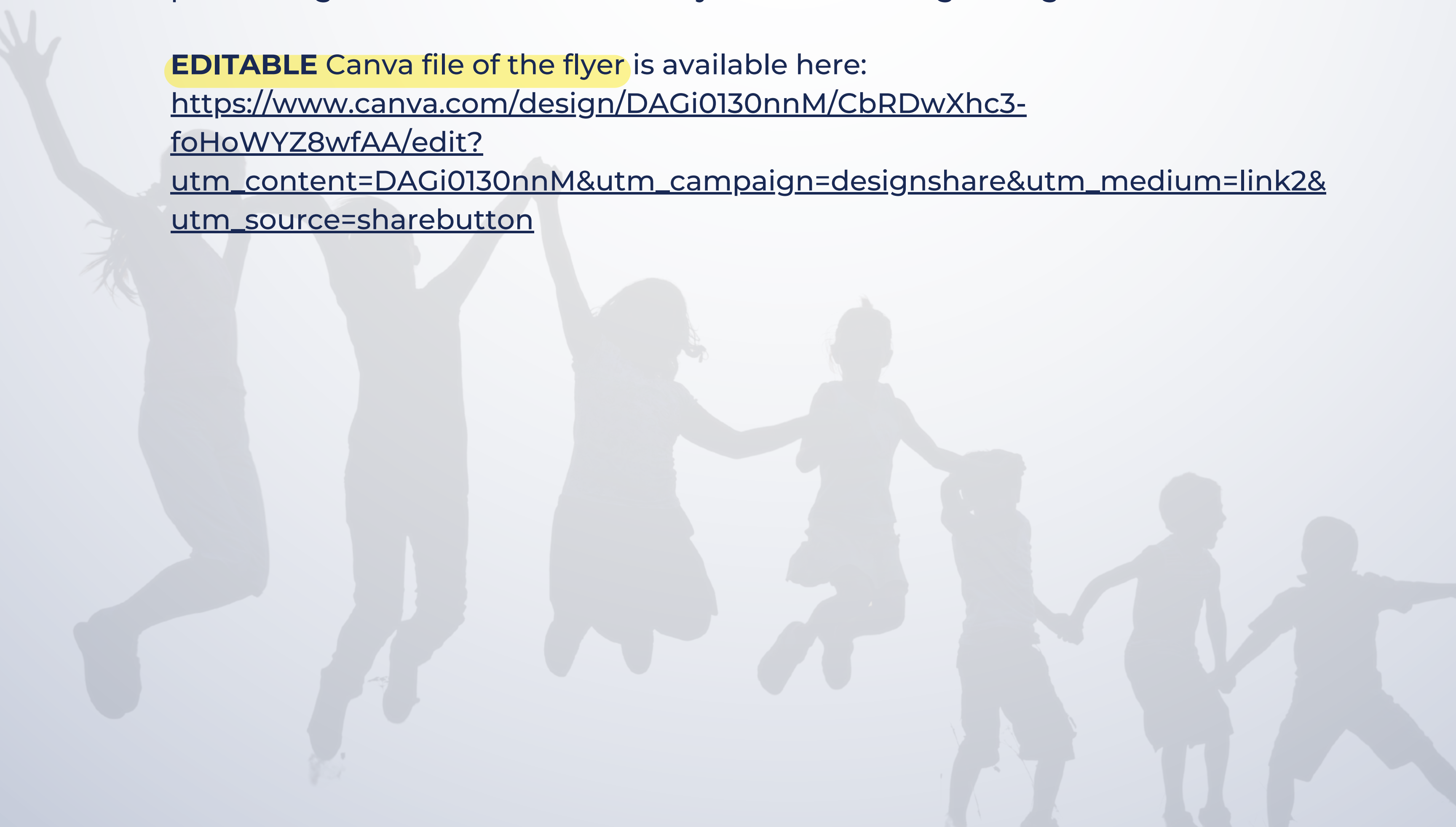
STEP #2/ Once the prayer service details are decided upon, please ask all the religious leaders to announce it in their respective communities.

Use the flyer provided as a template, note the time, date, and place, and add partner organizations for the service your branch is organizing.

EDITABLE Canva file of the flyer is available here:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGi0130nnM/CbRDwXhc3-foHoWYZ8wfAA/edit?](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGi0130nnM/CbRDwXhc3-foHoWYZ8wfAA/edit?utm_content=DAGi0130nnM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

[utm_content=DAGi0130nnM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGi0130nnM/CbRDwXhc3-foHoWYZ8wfAA/edit?utm_content=DAGi0130nnM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)





GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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FOR THOSE BRANCHES IN AN AREA THAT HAS ONE OR MORE UKRAINIAN SATURDAY SCHOOLS:

STEP #1/ For branches located in areas where there is a Ukrainian Saturday school, please organize the prayer service in the school or schools, if there is more than one in your area. Hold the prayer service in the school itself, unless the school is part of a parish as are some schools.

If the Ukrainian Saturday school is a part of the parish – please organize the prayer service with the parish priest and the school director where it would be best to hold the prayer service – either in the school or the church if it is nearby.

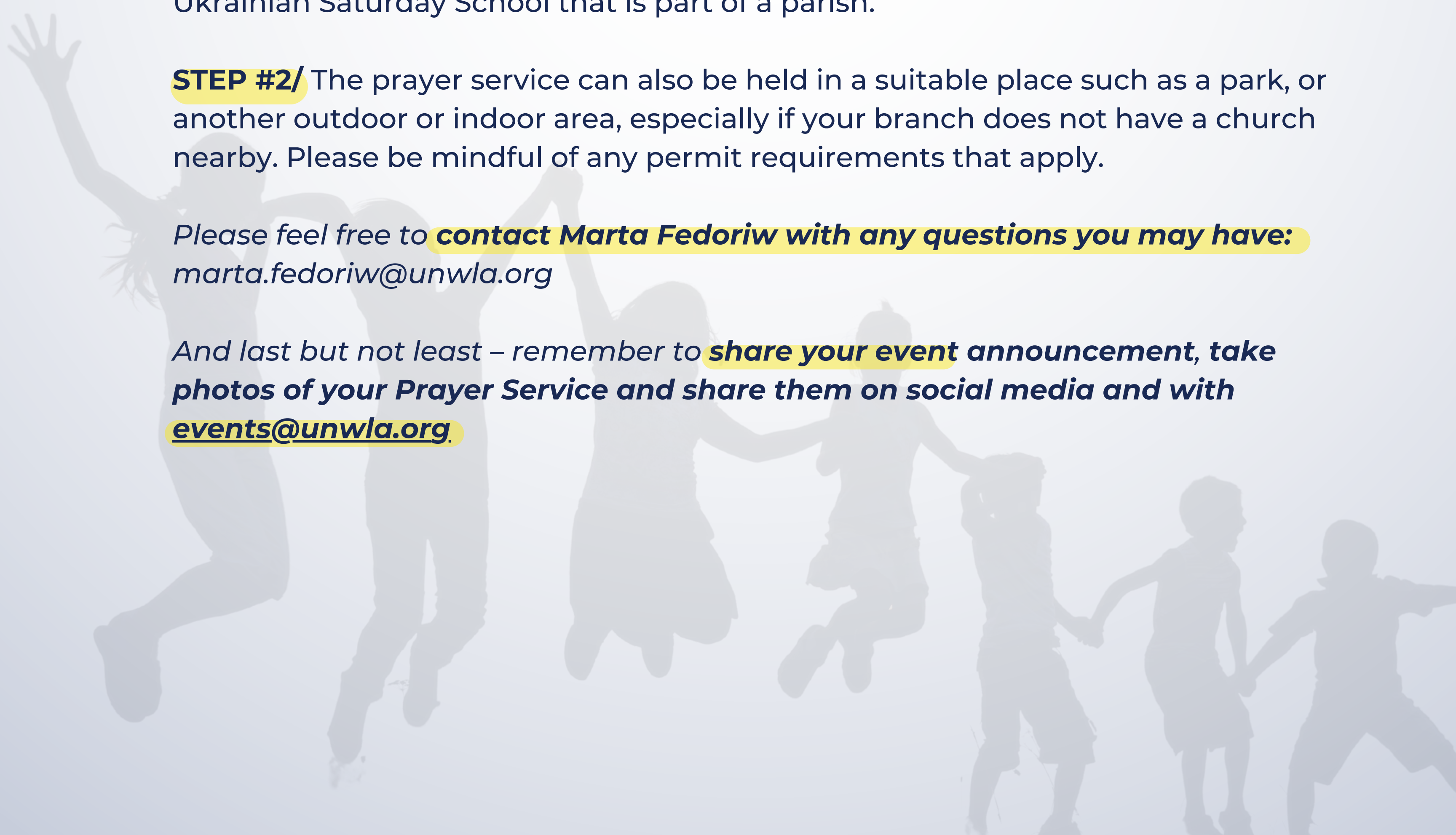
The organizing committee for this prayer service includes the Ukrainian American Shkil'na Rada, which will inform each director of each Ukrainian Saturday school that a UNWLA member will reach out to them to assist them in organizing the prayer service.

Please note – not every Ukrainian School is under the umbrella of the Shkil'na Rada – it is up to each branch to reach out to their Ukrainian Saturday School and organize the prayer service to be held at the school or the church if it is a Ukrainian Saturday School that is part of a parish.

STEP #2/ The prayer service can also be held in a suitable place such as a park, or another outdoor or indoor area, especially if your branch does not have a church nearby. Please be mindful of any permit requirements that apply.

Please feel free to **contact Marta Fedoriw with any questions you may have:** marta.fedoriw@unwla.org

And last but not least – remember to **share your event announcement, take photos of your Prayer Service and share them on social media and with events@unwla.org.**





GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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FAITH COMMUNITIES OUTREACH EMAIL TEMPLATE

Dear Pastor/Father/Rabbi/Imam _____:

We are writing to you as members of Branch ____ in _____, of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA). UNWLA is the oldest Ukrainian women's organization in the United States, celebrating our 100th anniversary this year. Our signature campaign, as we join together with our communities to support Ukraine as she defends herself and western democracy against Russian aggression, is the Children Praying for Children campaign. This campaign focuses around International Children's Day – June 1, 2025 — and calls on all children in our broader communities to come together to pray for the children of Ukraine--those who have suffered injury and displacement during war and especially, those who have been abducted by Russian troops and forcibly transferred to Russian territory. While the plight of Ukrainian children is particularly meaningful to our Ukrainian community, we believe that the wellbeing of children is one that resonates with each and every one of us, throughout our various and distinct communities.

With that in mind, we ask that you join with us on June 1, 2025 (or thereabouts) by participating in or creating an event during which the children of _____ pray together for Ukraine's children. Ideally, we hope your community can participate in a multid denominational event being organized by _____ (see contact info below). If you are unable to do that, we would be very grateful if you held an event at _____. This can range from a dedicated prayer at your regularly-scheduled worship service or a separate event with multiple activities planned around the theme of Children Praying for Children. Should you prefer an independent event, we only ask that you let us know, so that we can make note of it. Last year (the first for this campaign), we had 12 events take place across the country. We hope to exceed that number, since we will recognize that we gain strength from the support of one another. Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

[Link to the doc](#)



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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OUTLINE FOR OUTREACH TO CHURCH YOUTH GROUP (P.1)

Here is a plan for your presentation to the Church Youth Group:

Thank you for opportunity to meet/speak

Introduce yourself, your organization, and the campaign

Presentation: Two Questions

1. Why have the Children Praying for Children campaign?
2. Why should people (especially young people) care?

Pitch:

- We seek to unite all religious communities and raise awareness about the effect of Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine's children. Our goal is to create a sacred, prayer-filled space where children throughout our communities and throughout the country come together in compassionate action to pray for Ukraine's children.
- Russia has "forcibly transferred" (NOTE: polite phrase for "kidnapped") at least 19,546 children (aged infants through 17 yo) from their Ukrainian homes, schools, and families, and taken them to Russia or Russian-occupied territory. Only 1,247 have been returned/rescued to date.

What happens to these kidnapped children:

- illegally adopted (identities erased/obscured, given new names and birthdates)
- re-educated/indoctrinated (taught to hate Ukraine and everything Ukrainian; taught to believe that their families did not want them or that their families abandoned them)
- "Russified" (turned into Russian children)
- militarized (sent to military training camps and when of age, sent to fight against Ukraine)

What about other kids?

- Hundreds killed and injured, millions displaced [please use the factsheet to provide data]
- 669+ children killed by Russian bombings/strikes to date
- 1,854+ children injured by Russian bombings/strikes to date
- Approximately 1.6 million Ukrainian children live under occupation, and these children are also subject to indoctrination, Russification, militarization
- Over 4 million Ukrainian children are displaced (had to leave their homes/towns for safety)
- 2.5 million of these are "internally" displaced, i.e. they have moved to safer areas within Ukraine
- 1.8 million of these are "externally" displaced, i.e. they have moved to other countries for safety
- Even though these children live in relative safety, they have had to leave their homes, their friends, their schools. Their lives have been upended.



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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OUTLINE FOR OUTREACH TO CHURCH YOUTH GROUP (P.2)

Schools:

- Approximately 4,000 schools have been destroyed or damaged by Russian attacks.
- Approximately 100 new schools being built in Ukraine (funding through EU) are being built underground, to provide greater protection from bombing and from threat of radiation. Many children are still attending school online, rather than in physical classrooms.

Ask audience to close eyes and try to imagine, as you read the following:

READ EXCERPTS FROM "THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN" BOOK:

- (page 28, Antonina, 5 yo) It's so nice that there was only one air raid alarm today!
- (page 76, Matviy, 10 yo) I think that heaven and hell do not exist. Or . . . if there is heaven, I will definitely go there, because I've already seen hell. That wouldn't be fair.
- (page 124, Eva, 10 yo) Don't worry, mom, it's thunder. I can already tell thunder from explosions.
- (page 82, Yevhenia, 4 yo) War thinks it's strong. It's wrong, God is the strongest.
- (page 162, Sofiya, 8 yo) God always brings children home, mom.
- (page 204, Nazar, 9 yo) We haven't lived very long yet, we want to keep on living.

AND THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT, FROM AN OLDER CHILD LIVING UNDER OCCUPATION

Hello, my unknown reader. I can't tell you my name and I can't tell you what city I'm from. Because right now I am writing this text from a city occupied by the Russian army in the east of Ukraine. The war is a special world with its own laws and rules, where, unfortunately, the voices of children are barely heard, and everything is turned upside down—all your ideas about safety, fear, and the world in general. In these difficult times, not just destiny but even the survival of a child or a teenager depends on small decisions. No matter how sad it sounds, in some cases your voice is simply not heard, and you feel like a little puppy running around, unable to solve anything, waiting around for the "master's" decision ... we didn't have electricity for half a year. Now we have it, but there is still no water, gas or other advantages of civilization. It was easier for me while there were still friends around, but now they are gone, because everyone has left.

Now I'm sitting in my room trying to understand what is happening, but every time my brain errors out, and there's nothing you can do. You can only cry. I appeal to all parents, grandparents, guardians, and other people who shape children's destinies.

LISTEN TO THE CHILDREN. There is no greater happiness than when you are heard.

And that is why we should all care. We are lucky. We are safe. We are also lucky because we have faith that God hears us.



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OUTREACH TO THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY IN YOUR STATE

Dear First Lady _____:

I am writing to you as a member of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA).

UNWLA is the oldest Ukrainian women's organization in the United States, celebrating our 100 th anniversary this year. We are currently in the midst of our signature campaign, Children Praying for Children, joining together with all communities of faith across the country draw attention to the plight of Ukraine's children during war and to support Ukraine as she defends herself and western democracy against russian aggression. This campaign (focused around International Children's Day – June 1, 2025) calls on all children in our broader communities to come together to pray for the children of Ukraine--those who have

suffered injury and displacement during war and especially, those who have been

abducted by russian troops and forcibly transferred to russian territory. Children Praying for Children events will be taking place across the country this year.

In the continued spirit of this campaign, I respectfully ask that, as First Lady of the

state of _____, you launch an initiative state-wide for a Day of Prayer for

Ukrainian Children. While the plight of Ukrainian children is particularly meaningful

to our Ukrainian community, we believe that the wellbeing of children is one that

resonates with each and every one of us, throughout our various and distinct communities. Your powerful voice would ensure that these children are not forgotten and that they will be restored to the safety, security and loving embrace of their families.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

*Respectfully,
[your contact information]*

[Link to the doc](#)



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CONGRESSIONAL OUTREACH EMAIL TEMPLATE

Dear [Senator/Representative]:

On behalf of Branch _____ of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA), the oldest Ukrainian women's organization in the United States, celebrating our 100 th anniversary this year, I am writing to invite you and your staff to a solemn and moving upcoming event in our community titled Children Praying for Children on [date] in [location]. In observance of International Children's Day, the Children Praying for Children campaign brings attention to the Ukrainian children abducted, injured and otherwise affected by russia's invasion of Ukraine. We would be honored if you and your staff would attend this meaningful event and make a few remarks, uniting with our Ukrainian-American community and non-Ukrainian community partners, especially the community's children, in support of all Ukrainian children impacted by war.

The event brings together local children and families in prayer and solidarity with Ukrainian children who have been deeply affected by the war — especially the over 20,000 children who have been abducted from temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories by Russian forces. The Ukrainian government, along with international organizations, has been working to locate and return these children, often facing extreme obstacles. Through prayer, community, and creative activities, this event aims to raise awareness of this humanitarian tragedy and inspire support for the safe return of abducted and displaced children to their families. The event will take place at [insert Event Details, including time, location] and will include [brief description of your local event, e.g., "a multi-faith prayer service, children's activities, and remarks from local faith leaders and Ukrainian-American families."]

While the plight of Ukrainian children is particularly meaningful to our Ukrainian community, we believe that the wellbeing of children is one that resonates with each and every one of us, throughout our various and distinct communities. We hope that your schedule will permit you and your staff to participate in our Children Praying for Children event. I will follow up with your scheduler but if in the meantime you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

[Name]

[Telephone]

[Email Address]

[Link to the doc](#)



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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MEDIA OUTREACH EMAIL TEMPLATE

To: [Editor/Reporter Name]

[Media Outlet Name]

[Outlet Address or Email]

Subject: Media Invitation – Children Praying for Children Event on June 1, 2025

Dear [Editor/Reporter Name],

We invite you to cover an important and moving event taking place in your community on Saturday, June 1, 2025, in observance of International Children's Day — a national prayer initiative titled *Children Praying for Children*, organized by the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) and local partners.

The event brings together local children and families in prayer and solidarity with Ukrainian children who have been deeply affected by the war — especially the over 20,000 children who have been abducted from temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories by Russian forces. The Ukrainian government, along with international organizations, has been working to locate and return these children, often facing extreme obstacles.

Through prayer, community, and creative activities, this event aims to raise awareness of this humanitarian tragedy and inspire support for the safe return of abducted and displaced children to their families.

We welcome your presence to cover this event, speak with organizers, and share the voices of community members — especially local children—joining together in support of their Ukrainian peers. The event will include [brief description of your local event, e.g., “a multi-faith prayer service, children's activities, and remarks from local faith leaders and Ukrainian-American families.”]

[Event Details (location, time etc) and contact person information (name & contacts)]

We are happy to provide background information, photos, or arrange interviews. Attached you'll find a media advisory, fact sheet, and press materials to assist your coverage.

Thank you for helping us bring attention to this urgent and heartbreaking issue.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Title/Branch, UNWLA]

[Contact Info]

[Link to the doc](#)



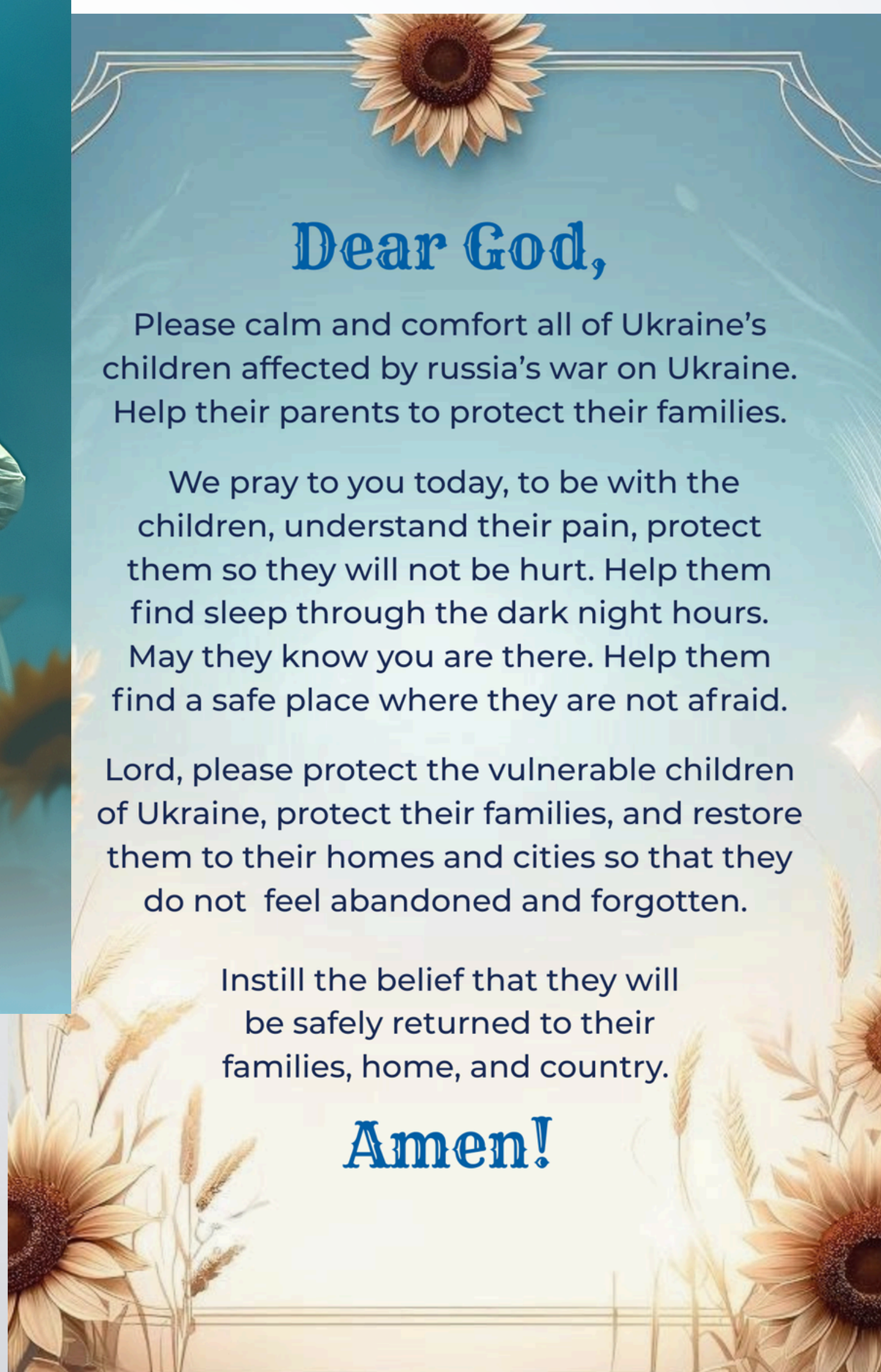
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PRAYER CARD

PRINT AND DISTRIBUTE DURING THE SERVICE OR IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH



LINK TO THE FILE READY FOR PRINT



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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FACT SHEET

The repercussions of the Russian invasion extend beyond the soldiers in the frontline trenches, engulfing civilians in villages and cities alike. Missiles have injured and killed children, decimated homes, schools, hospitals, and energy grids. Children have been raped, kidnapped, left orphaned, forced into bomb shelters, and had their education disrupted. The scars of these harrowing experiences have been devastating for Ukraine's children and will leave an enduring impact.

While it's challenging to ascertain the precise numbers due to ongoing attacks, compounded by the difficulty of obtaining data from the Russian-occupied areas, the following data highlights the enormity of the situation.

CHILDREN KILLED

As of February 21, 2025, the known number of children killed reached 669 (UNICEF).

CHILDREN WOUNDED

UNICEF reports that 1,854 children were injured (UNICEF). The number of casualties rose 54% in 2024 over 2023.

CHILDREN FORCIBLY DEPORTED OR DISPLACED

19,546 children have been forcibly deported by Russia to Russian-controlled areas, according to Ukraine's National Information Bureau.

The Russian Federation claims to have deported 744,000 (Children of War Portal)

CHILDREN REFUGEES

An estimated 5.1 million Ukrainian children have been displaced from their homes since the invasion in 2022, finding shelter in other countries or being internally displaced. (Children of War Portal)

CHILDREN SEXUALLY ABUSED

The Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine has established sixteen known cases of sexual abuse. (Children of War Portal)

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Approximately 4,000 educational facilities have been damaged or destroyed since the start of the 2022 full-scale invasion according to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, severely impacting the consistency and quality of education opportunities for millions.

[Link to the doc](#)



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

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USEFUL LINKS

A Media Outreach template [Link to the doc](#)

Fact sheet for reference [Link to the doc](#)

A template for use for promo [Link to the Canva file](#)

Faith communities outreach letter [Link to the doc](#)

Congressional outreach letter [Link to the doc](#)

Outreach to the First Lady of your State [Link to the file](#)

Prayer [Link to the file](#)

If you have any questions please contact:

*Anna Bereznya,
UNWLA Communications
communications@unwla.org*

*Anna Hryniv,
Campaign Outreach Coordinator
annahryniv@unwla.org*

Deep appreciation for your efforts

*Christina Tershakovec,
UNWLA Advocacy National Chair*

*Marta Fedoriw,
Chair of the UNWLA Return Ukraine's Children Initiative*

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JUNE 1, 2025

UNITE IN PRAYER FOR UKRAINE'S CHILDREN



**WISHING EVERYONE
A SUCCESSFUL AND
IMPACTFUL EVENTS**