



Dear Friends,

The word *war* comes from the 11th-century Old English words *wyrre* and *were*, and is ultimately derived from the Proto-Germanic word *werzō* meaning 'mixture, confusion'.

So long before people spoke about the 'fog of war', war itself meant confusion.

We have certainly seen that confusion this week as Trump has claimed one outcome, Netanyahu another; as Iran has retaliated and other actors, Hezbollah in Lebanon, have joined the conflict. There is also the chaos of hundreds of thousands of people stranded in the region after Iran, Iraq, Israel, Syria, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates all shut their skies when the strikes began.

In January, the European Baptist Federation encouraged churches to pray (as below) for the people of Iran and the church in that country.

They encouraged Iranian Christians with these words.....*"I have called you back from the ends of the earth, saying, 'You are my servant.' For I have chosen you and will not throw you away. Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."* (Isaiah 41:9-10 NLT)

Please join with Baptists around the world praying for Iran, and for other countries in the region, now.

- We lift up the people of Iran, **asking God to protect the fearful, comfort the grieving, and provide for the displaced and vulnerable.** May oppression end, freedom take root, and hope rise where darkness has prevailed. Bring healing to wounded bodies and hearts and restore peace within families and communities.
- We pray for **believers and the Church:** for safety amid persecution, wisdom and courage for leaders serving in secrecy, and for the light of Christ to shine powerfully through love and faith, even in crisis.
- We ask for **leaders, in Iran and across the world, to be guided by wisdom, compassion, and restraint.** May violence cease, bloodshed end, and hearts turn from tyranny toward justice. Lord, intervene to calm conflict, restore peace in the region, and accomplish your righteous purposes.
- We lift up our brothers and sisters in Christ, and every underground church being faithfully planted and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Much closer to home, please keep Helen and David Stafford in your prayers. Helen fainted and fell on Sunday night and has a fracture at the top of her spine. She is currently in a lot of pain and has movement in her arms and legs but must remain still while the fracture heals.

Let us continue to be people of prayer, people who simply turn our focus to God and hold these concerns – a world in confusion and friends in pain – before our God who promises to strengthen and help us.

Grace and peace be with you,

Belinda