

# Prayer Alert

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**See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1a)**

We are pleased to enclose this week's edition of Prayer Alert.

You may like to explore our new online Prayer [Alert Prayer Wall](#) where we can add our own prayers and praise, interactively. We trust that you will find this helpful and encouraging!

## Join the Team!

Prayer Alert is produced by a voluntary online team spread across England. If you appreciate what we do and are computer confident, with researching news, writing, editing and / or proofing skills, we would love to hear from you! Please hit reply, introduce yourself, and we will be in touch.

Thank you for partnering with us in praying for the nations.

Blessings,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert Team

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## Praise Reports

### [Shine Your Light: sharing hope and the love of God at Christmas](#)

The vision for Shine Your Light is that the whole church across the family of nations stands united to share the Gospel with the whole of society this Christmas. Every local church and believer who signs up becomes a light that shines to brighten up the whole land like a Christmas tree. The nationwide campaign will run on 16 and 17 December. Shine Your Light events of all kinds will occur at town halls, in high streets and shopping centres, and in other public places. Encourage everyone you know to register and share their plans. Whether you are an individual joining with a group of friends and neighbours, a small church, or larger gathering, we'd love to hear what you are doing. Register as an individual or as a church - see the 'more' link.

Praise: You, Lord, for the vision of Shine Your Light, uniting believers across the nations to share your Gospel this Christmas. (Matthew 5:16)  
More: [www.shineyourlight.org.uk/](http://www.shineyourlight.org.uk/)

### [Another Christian film stuns Hollywood](#)

'Duck Dynasty' star Miss Kay Robertson is overwhelmed with emotion as she discusses the astounding success of 'The Blind', a Christian feature film that tells the real-life story of her life with husband Phil Robertson. The film has become the most successful in Fathom Events history, earning over \$16.8 million. Miss Kay tearfully expresses her joy in sharing the story of God changing her husband's heart. The film delves into the struggles the Robertsons faced before their fame, including Phil's past of addiction and disconnection. It portrays Phil's transformation as he embraces faith, and Kay's journey of forgiveness. Miss Kay shares stories of marriages being mended and individuals turning to Jesus after watching the film. She emphasises the importance of sharing one's truth and believes it can provide hope to others. The success of 'The Blind', which reflects God's transformative power, has led to numerous positive outcomes, including baptisms among recovering addicts. Miss Kay sees God's hand at work through the film, and she encourages fans to trust in God's timing. 'The Blind' was released digitally on 3 November and will be available on DVD/Blu-ray on 14 November, continuing to inspire and touch hearts.

Praise: You, Lord, for the success of 'The Blind' and for the transformation that Your grace brings to our lives and relationships. (Psalm 30:11)  
More: [www.faithwire.com/2023/11/07/praise-god-miss-kay-gets-emotional-after-duck-dynasty-stars-latest-project-stuns-hollywood/](http://www.faithwire.com/2023/11/07/praise-god-miss-kay-gets-emotional-after-duck-dynasty-stars-latest-project-stuns-hollywood/)

## British Isles

### More than one million people on waiting lists as NHS backlog grows

The NHS backlog in England has reached a record high, with 7.77 million people waiting for non-emergency care by the end of September. What is more concerning is that about one million people are on multiple waiting lists for treatment, with some on up to five lists. The waiting list is now nearly 3.5 million higher than pre-pandemic levels. The Royal College of Nursing's chief nurse, Prof Nicola Ranger, attributes this to a shortage of nurses, and suggests the Government has lost control of waiting times. Although progress has been made in reducing waits of more than 18 months, ongoing strikes by healthcare workers have disrupted efforts. The strikes have cost the NHS an estimated £1 billion in premium rates and preparations. The Government's rejection of extra funding for strike-related costs has forced the NHS to use existing budgets, including those for IT and maintenance, to address the backlog. This has led to a relaxation of treatment targets, acknowledging the prolonged effort needed to address the backlog.

Pray: We lift up those waiting for care in the NHS. Lord, provide comfort and healing. May the necessary resources be provided by the Government to bring this crisis to a halt. (Psalm 34:17)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-67367311](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-67367311)

### Climate: Justin Welby urges faith leaders to 'lead by example'

The Archbishop of Canterbury has called on global faith leaders to take action against the effects of climate change. Speaking at the Global Leaders Faith Summit in Abu Dhabi, Justin Welby emphasised the challenges millions of Christians worldwide face due to the climate crisis. He stressed the importance of caring for the climate and neighbours, especially the poor and vulnerable, and urged faith leaders to lead by example in protecting the planet. The Archbishop's audience included UN secretary-general António Guterres and a Vatican representative. He highlighted that faith leaders represent the majority of people globally and can demonstrate the desire for change and support bold decisions at COP28. The Church of England has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, divesting from fossil fuels. Archbishop Welby's message precedes COP28 in Dubai, which Pope Francis plans to attend - the first time a pope will participate in the UN environmental meeting since its inception in 1995.

Pray: Lord, we give thanks to You for the wonderful creation. Help us to steward and take care of it and grant us wisdom on how to best do that. We pray for powers and policy makers to ensure measures are in place to protect the most vulnerable from the effects of climate change and stir churches and individuals to commit to changes that preserve our planet and care for the needy. (Genesis 2:15)

More: [premierchristian.news/en/news/article/justin-welby-urges-faith-leaders-to-lead-by-example-at-climate-summit](http://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/justin-welby-urges-faith-leaders-to-lead-by-example-at-climate-summit)

### New rules unveiled to protect young children on social media

The UK's Online Safety Act, signed into law last week, introduces new rules aimed at protecting children online. Ofcom has unveiled its first draft codes of practice under the act, focusing on illegal material such as grooming content, fraud, and child sexual abuse. The rules include limiting direct messages and removing them from suggested friend lists to protect children. Tech platforms will be legally required to keep children's location data private and restrict who can send direct messages to them. Ofcom will publish more rules in the coming months, with each new code requiring parliamentary approval. The goal is to enforce the codes by the end of next year. The act also encourages the use of technology to identify illegal images of abuse and prevent their dissemination.

Pray: for the safety of children online. Father, guide tech firms and governments to protect them from harm. (Psalm 82:3)

More: [news.sky.com/story/new-rules-unveiled-to-protect-young-children-on-social-media-13003498](http://news.sky.com/story/new-rules-unveiled-to-protect-young-children-on-social-media-13003498)

### Home secretary facing backlash for criticising police

Suella Braverman is facing a backlash after claiming police 'play favourites' with pro-Palestinian protests. Downing Street did not clear the controversial article in which the home secretary criticised the policing of pro-Palestinian marches in London. The prime minister is facing calls to sack Ms Braverman from her position in Cabinet from top Labour shadow ministers and the leader of the Liberal Democrats. The backlash comes after the publication of Ms Braverman's opinion piece in The Times, in which she accused the police of having a softer approach towards left-wing protests. A spokesman for Rishi Sunak said, 'The Prime Minister continues to believe that the police will operate without fear or favour'. Members of the Tory party have also attempted to distance themselves from her 'inflammatory rhetoric', with transport secretary Mark Harper actively disagreeing with her on Times Radio. She also criticised plans for a protest in London on Armistice Day, repeating allegations that its organisers were linked to Hamas and describing them as 'disturbingly reminiscent of Ulster'. She also claimed that pro-Palestinian mobs are 'largely ignored, even when clearly breaking the law'. Earlier, the PM accepted that the planned march on Saturday would go ahead despite opposition from himself and the home secretary.

Pray: that our ministers will act and speak with equity, integrity and wisdom. Pray that all marches will remain peaceful, without violence or confrontation with the police. (Proverbs 2:9-11)

More: [www.itv.com/news/2023-11-09/calls-to-sack-braverman-after-comparing-pro-palestinian-marches-to-the-troubles](http://www.itv.com/news/2023-11-09/calls-to-sack-braverman-after-comparing-pro-palestinian-marches-to-the-troubles)

### Christian Institute challenging conversion therapy ban

The Christian Institute, through its [Let Us Pray](https://letuspray.uk/) campaign (<https://letuspray.uk/>), is defending the normal activities of churches against potential government bans on so-called 'conversion therapy'. This term encompasses various practices, including abusive ones already illegal. LGBT campaigners seek to criminalise even biblical preaching, prayer, pastoral care, and parenting that does not endorse liberal theology. The Christian Institute has engaged solicitors in England, Northern Ireland, and Scotland to prepare for a potential judicial review if such bans restrict religious freedom. Legal advice warns that an overly broad ban could breach the European Convention on Human Rights and lead to legal challenges against the government. The Christian Institute has previously succeeded in judicial reviews against UK governments in 2007 and 2016. However, the controversial legislation was left out of the King's speech: [see https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67345496](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67345496)

Pray: for wisdom and discernment in the face of potential government bans on religious practices. Father, protect religious freedom. (Matthew 5:10)

More: [www.christian.org.uk/campaign/broad-conversion-therapy-ban/](http://www.christian.org.uk/campaign/broad-conversion-therapy-ban/)

## Council costs warning as fostering places fall

A decline in available fostering places has led to local councils wasting substantial amounts of money, warns a carers' organisation. Capacity issues can force councils to place children in more costly residential homes, according to sector bodies, but the Government claims to be investing £27 million to improve fostering place availability. Official Ofsted statistics indicate that there were 72,770 approved mainstream fostering places in England as of 31 March, 8% less than on the same date in 2019. The decline is primarily due to an 11% reduction in the number of mainstream local authority households, down to 19,835. Meanwhile, the number of independent fostering agency households has risen by less than 1%, and 'family and friends' households have increased from 6,930 to 8,400. Foster Support CEO Jane Collins emphasised the importance of retaining foster carers, both for financial reasons and to maintain their experience and training. However, she noted that local authorities are struggling in this regard.

Pray: for the well-being of children in need of fostering, that loving homes may be found for them. We ask for wisdom and resources for local councils to address capacity issues. (Psalm 82:3)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-67359253](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-67359253)

## Europe

### Russia sentences another Jehovah's Witness

A court in the Chelyabinsk region of Russia has sentenced a Jehovah's Witness (JW) follower to seven years in prison on charges of 'extremism'. Yevgeny Bushev had been under house arrest for over a year on allegations of continuing 'the illegal activities of a banned religious organisation'. In 2017 the Supreme Court declared the JW movement to be extremist, banning its estimated 400 branches across the country. Bushev is the 15th JW follower from the region to be prosecuted. The prosecution's witness was an employee of the National Guard (Rosgvardia) who had 'shown interest in the Bible': a linguistic examination concluded that Bushev had 'tempted' him to accept the JW faith when responding to questions about religion. International human rights NGOs have condemned Russia's crackdown on JW followers in the years since the ban, and in June 2022 the European Court of Human Rights said that Russia had violated over 1,400 followers' right to religious freedom.

Pray: that the decision to ban the JW movement will be reversed, and pressure brought to bear on Russia to respect human rights. (Amos 5:24)

More: [www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/11/07/russia-hands-jehovahs-witness-follower-7-year-jail-term-for-extremism-a83025](http://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/11/07/russia-hands-jehovahs-witness-follower-7-year-jail-term-for-extremism-a83025)

### Ukraine accuses Russia of hitting civilian ship

On 8 November Ukraine said that a Russian missile had struck a civilian ship while it was moored in a port in the Black Sea region of Odessa, killing a pilot and injuring four others. The missile hit the ship's superstructure, which includes the command cabin. The ship was travelling under the Liberian flag, and the three wounded crew members were citizens of the Philippines. If confirmed, the attack would be the first time that Russian forces have hit a civilian vessel sailing near the Odessa region since Moscow pulled out of a UN-brokered deal in July which allowed Ukraine to export its grain through the Black Sea. In another incident, on 3 November, Russia targeted a military medals ceremony, killing at least a dozen men. The Ukrainian army has been criticised for organising an event involving so many soldiers in such a public and old-fashioned way. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/world/europe/ukraine-medal-ceremony-russia.html>

Pray: that both combatants will observe the Geneva conventions. Continue to pray for an end to the war, and that it will not be overlooked because of the current focus on Israel and Gaza. (Deuteronomy 5:17)

More: [www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/world/europe/ukraine-russia-black-sea-ship.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/world/europe/ukraine-russia-black-sea-ship.html)

### France: peace forum focuses on global warming and AI

The sixth Paris Peace Forum, on 10 and 11 November, will focus on four different topics. Emmanuel Macron, along with Barbadian PM Mia Mottley and several African leaders, will assess the progress of the 'Paris Pact for People and the Planet', launched in June, which aims to provide substantial funding to combat poverty and climate change, in preparation for December's COP28 in Dubai. An appeal will be launched to address the 'collapse' of 'all ice surfaces on a global scale.' States affected by glacier loss, such as Nepal and Kyrgyzstan, will participate, as will China and India. Although Russia, a major Arctic actor, will not participate due to the conflict in Ukraine, the Elysée asserts that this will not be an obstacle to cooperation between other countries. Macron will also preside over the fifth Christchurch Call Summit, launched with New Zealand after the terrorist attack in Christchurch in 2019, aiming to enhance efforts to 'combat terrorist and violent extremist content online'. Another top priority for Macron is to regulate digital platforms and artificial intelligence.

Pray: for positive outcomes to all these discussions, with lasting impacts. (James 1:22-24)

More: [www.africanews.com/2023/11/08/paris-peace-forum-addresses-climate-change-ai-regulation-and-global-cooperation/](http://www.africanews.com/2023/11/08/paris-peace-forum-addresses-climate-change-ai-regulation-and-global-cooperation/)

## Worldwide

### Latest news from Gaza

Israel will begin to implement four-hour 'humanitarian pauses' in northern Gaza each day to allow people to flee, the White House has said. A spokesman called the move a step in the right direction, and said the USA wanted the pauses to continue as long as they are needed. Israel has committed to announcing each window at least three hours in advance. The US still does not support a ceasefire in Gaza at this time, but aims to see at least 150 humanitarian trucks entering the strip each day. Fierce fighting has continued, and the health ministry in Gaza (controlled by Hamas) says that the number of Palestinians killed is now more than 10,000. Meanwhile, Islamic Jihad has released a video of two hostages, and offered to release them if certain conditions were met. The hostages criticised Benjamin Netanyahu; it was not certain if they were reading from a script (<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-772529>). A humanitarian conference in Paris today called for a total ceasefire: see <https://www.reuters.com/world/few-expectations-france-seeks-tangible-results-gaza-conference-2023-11-09/>

Pray: that the four-hour pauses will be a first step towards a total ceasefire. (Matthew 5:9)

More: [news.sky.com/story/israel-gaza-latest-hamas-war-sky-news-blog-12978800](https://news.sky.com/story/israel-gaza-latest-hamas-war-sky-news-blog-12978800)

### **Cameroon: 20+ killed by English-speaking separatists**

On 6 November more than twenty people, including women and children, were killed in an attack by English-speaking separatists in western Cameroon. Since the end of 2016, this area (populated mainly by the English-speaking minority) has seen a deadly conflict between pro-independence armed groups and the security forces. Each side has been accused of crimes against civilians by international NGOs and the UN. The government said that the 'terrorists' attacked using firearms and traditional weapons, and burnt down around ten houses. A resident thought the attack was probably made on that day because it was the anniversary of Paul Biya's accession to power as president; he added that a meeting of the RDPC (the all-powerful presidential party) had been scheduled to take place nearby. Cameroon, which has a population of nearly 30 million, has been ruled with an iron fist for 41 years by Biya.

Pray: for all those mourning the victims of this attack. Pray for an end to this conflict. (Matthew 5:4)

More: [www.africanews.com/2023/11/08/cameroon-at-least-20-dead-in-attack-by-english-speaking-separatists-government/](http://www.africanews.com/2023/11/08/cameroon-at-least-20-dead-in-attack-by-english-speaking-separatists-government/)

### **USA / Italy: sixteen mafia leaders arrested**

On 7 November, sixteen alleged leaders and associates of the Gambino crime family were arrested in the US and Italy. The charges against them include racketeering, extortion, witness retaliation, conspiracy and fraud. Another suspect is still at large. The US-based suspects were due to appear in court in New York on Wednesday. Prosecutors have outlined a pattern of intimidation and violent assaults intended to embezzle funds and defraud unions and employee benefit plans. The defendants were also charged with threatening witnesses, money laundering and firearms offences. The Gambino family is one of the five prominent New York-area mafia syndicates collectively known as La Cosa Nostra. The defendants face maximum sentences of between twenty and 180 years in prison.

Pray: that all those involved in these criminal activities will receive their just punishment. (Galatians 6:7)

More: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-67339981](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-67339981)

### **Iran: tensions over jail sentence for French national**

France said on 8 November that one of its citizens being held in Iran has been sentenced to five years in prison on a baseless conviction, and called for his immediate release and that of three other of its nationals held in the country. Ties between the two countries have been strained over the issue in what Paris has said are arbitrary arrests that are equivalent to state hostage taking. Louis Arnaud, who has been held since September 2022, is being detained at the Evin prison in Tehran. His mother said that the pretexts given for his sentencing were for propaganda and harming the security of the Iranian state: 'These are completely baseless, a carbon copy of what they attribute to other Europeans held in Iran.' In recent years, the elite Revolutionary Guards have arrested dozens of dual nationals and foreigners, mostly on charges related to espionage and security. Rights groups have accused Iran of trying to extract concessions from other countries through such arrests - a charge which the government denies.

Pray: for the release of all such prisoners, and for cordial relations between the two countries to be resumed. (Hebrews 13:3)

More: [www.reuters.com/world/france-says-five-year-conviction-citizen-held-iran-unacceptable-2023-11-08/](http://www.reuters.com/world/france-says-five-year-conviction-citizen-held-iran-unacceptable-2023-11-08/)

### **Argentina: election outcome difficult to predict**

Opinion polls are showing an increasingly tight race between Peronist economy minister Sergio Massa and radical libertarian Javier Milei ahead of a runoff ballot for president on 19 November. The two candidates offer polarised visions for the embattled Latin American country, the region's third largest economy, a major supplier of grains, beef and lithium, but also the largest debtor to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). One recent survey showed Massa ahead with 42.4% of the likely vote against Milei on 39.7%, his lead more than cut in half versus the previous poll in late October. He is still seen as the candidate to beat, but Milei has gained ground, winning the backing of conservative Patricia Bullrich, who finished third in the first-round vote, and her powerful ally, former President Mauricio Macri. Significantly, with some 18% of those polled remaining unsure, the outcome is hard to call.

Pray: that whichever candidate is elected will be able to make a major improvement to the country's future. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

More: [www.reuters.com/world/americas/argentina-polls-show-election-race-tightening-winner-hard-to-call-2023-11-06/](http://www.reuters.com/world/americas/argentina-polls-show-election-race-tightening-winner-hard-to-call-2023-11-06/)

### **US elections: Democrats do well in spite of Biden's popularity ratings**

The Democratic Party's strong showing in off-year elections has encouraged Joe Biden and his supporters, although his popularity is low (it is now 39%, the lowest since April). Some segments of the party have lost faith in Biden, frustrated by his Israel stance, the lack of movement on climate change, or high prices. However, encouraging signs included a victory by Democratic incumbent governor Andy Beshear in Kentucky over a well-regarded Republican opponent, the passage in Republican-voting Ohio of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing abortion rights, and Democratic wins in the battleground state of Pennsylvania. The Ohio result shows abortion rights remain a winning political issue for Democrats after the conservative majority on the Supreme Court ended the constitutional right to an abortion, overriding public opinion. Whether victories for Democrats this week are a definitive sign of strength for Biden's re-election is unclear. Biden, who turns 81 this month, currently faces no serious primary challengers and has raised tens of millions of dollars for his re-election campaign. His fundraising has surpassed that of Donald Trump, 77, who backed the losing Kentucky governor candidate.

Pray: that all those newly elected will have the best interests of their constituents at heart. (Proverbs 11:14)

More: [www.reuters.com/world/us/ignore-polls-biden-team-says-after-democrats-election-night-wins-2023-11-08/](http://www.reuters.com/world/us/ignore-polls-biden-team-says-after-democrats-election-night-wins-2023-11-08/)

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