

Prayer Alert

ISSUE 47-2023 | Friday 24 November 2023
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Deep calls to deep in the roar of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and breakers have swept over me. (Psalm 42:7)

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

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READY: Your prayer has power! James 5:16 One simple prayer for someone in need can impact their eternity. SET: One encounter changes a life: 'Today, I asked the gas station cashier how her day was going so far. She responded with OK. I asked if I could pray for her. She looked a bit shocked but quickly responded, sincerely, "Yes, you can". With tears in her eyes, she asked for prayer for her anxiety. After I prayed, she grabbed both my hands and thanked me. I asked her if she knew if she was going to heaven. She said: "Yes!" I asked how she knew and she responded, "I want to go there because my dad and Grandpa are there". I explained how we can know if we are going to heaven, and I explained the Gospel to her. I asked, "Now that you know, is there any reason that you wouldn't want to ask Jesus for his free gift of salvation?" We prayed together, and she accepted Christ as her Saviour today.' GO: Pray for the opportunity to pray for someone today!

Praise: You, Father, for the transformative power of prayer. Open the door of opportunity for me to share the Gospel today. (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

More: <https://gomovement.world/>

[Give thanks for the life and ministry of David Pytches](#)

On 21 November David Pytches, co-founder of New Wine, died after a sustained period of illness. David and his wife Mary started New Wine in 1989, seeking to help churches experience renewal in the power of the Spirit. Their ministry has touched many lives over the years. John and Anne Coles, who led New Wine for many years after David and Mary, have said: 'David entitled his memoirs "Living on the Edge", and we thank God for the way in which he lived like that and showed us and countless others how to do so also. He humbly, lovingly, and courageously pioneered aspects of church life and mission in the power of the Spirit, which not only changed his own church and parish but also became models for hundreds of church leaders and churches around the world. This included his pioneering of New Wine as both a summer gathering inspiring thousands of church members and a network of church leaders for mutual encouragement in ministry. His love for Jesus and the Bible, his commitment to personal holiness, his persistence in prayer, his personal prophecies, and his willingness to give away everything with which God blessed him were an inspiration to us personally, and we will miss his role in our lives as a true "Father in God".' Read the full article in the link below.

Praise: God for David's life, his holiness, persistence in prayer, and generosity. May we continue to follow his example. (Hebrews 12:1)

More: www.new-wine.org/stories/david-pytches/

British Isles

Autumn Statement: NI cut but tax burden still rises

In his Autumn Statement on 22 November, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt announced a significant cut in National Insurance from January, from 12% to 10%. However, due to previous tax changes, many workers might not see substantial benefits. He also raised the state pension by 8.5% and universal credit by 6.7%. Hunt claimed the Government had stabilised the economy, allowing for tax cuts aimed at boosting growth ahead of the next year's general election. Labour criticised the NI cut as insufficient compared to previous tax increases by the Conservative government. Hunt also made a tax break for business investments in new equipment permanent, touted as the 'biggest business tax cut in modern history.' Despite these cuts, the overall tax burden is set to reach a 70-year high. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) revised growth forecasts downwards and projected a delay in the return to pre-pandemic living standards until 2027/28, citing prolonged inflation and higher interest rates. The NI reduction, seen as a significant move, led to speculation about an early general election.

Pray: for wisdom for economic stewardship. Pray for those struggling with low incomes and benefits. (James 1:5)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-67491863

Chancellor announces back to work plan for disabled people

On 22 November Jeremy Hunt unveiled a new Back to Work Plan, focusing on helping disabled individuals, those with long-term health conditions, and the long-term unemployed. The plan enhances four different support programmes, and also the WorkWell service, introduced in the 2023 Spring Budget, aims to assist nearly 60,000 long-term sick or disabled people. However, the plan includes stricter DWP sanctions for those able to work but not engaging with Jobcentre services or refusing work. Failure to engage could lead to the closure of their benefit claims. While the Chancellor highlights a balance of support and consequences, Disability Rights UK (DR UK) criticises the approach, arguing that employment barriers for disabled individuals lie in societal issues and lack of employer support. It stresses the absence of evidence supporting the effectiveness of sanctions and emphasises the need for support and adjustments for the employable while protecting those who cannot work from sanctions. DR UK advocates for investment in the benefits system, fairer structures, and prioritising the wellbeing of disabled and long-term sick individuals.

Pray: for fair and equitable treatment of people going through hardship. Pray for guidance for all efforts to support and uplift the sick and vulnerable. (Psalm 34:6)

More: news.sky.com/story/autumn-statement-back-to-work-welfare-reforms-demonise-disabled-people-13013672

£5 million to fight threat of drug-resistant infections

The Government has allocated £5 million in seed funding to the Fleming Centre, a new initiative led by Imperial College London, to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This funding forms part of a broader investment to strengthen the UK's life sciences sector. Set to open in 2028 in the hospital where Sir Alexander Fleming discovered the first antibiotic, the Fleming Centre aims to address the global challenge of AMR, which causes over one million deaths annually. AMR occurs when microorganisms develop resistance to treatments like antibiotics, posing a significant public health threat. The centre is committed to placing society at the forefront of solving AMR. Jeremy Hunt emphasised its role in inspiring future world-changing innovations, and Professor Lord Darzi highlighted the importance of this funding in developing the centre and addressing this urgent challenge. See <https://www.flemingcentre.org/>

Pray: blessing and guidance for these efforts to overcome antimicrobial resistance for the benefit of global health. (Jeremiah 33:6)

More: www.imperial.ac.uk/news/249653/uk-government-backs-fleming-centre-fight/

Grieving community turns to church for solace after death of four teens

In Shrewsbury, the community is mourning the loss of four teenagers (all pupils at the same school) who tragically died during a camping trip in north Wales. They were found in a car off the road near Tremadog, Gwynedd, after being reported missing two days earlier. The news of their deaths has left the town in a state of shock, with many seeking comfort at the local Oxon Parish Church. Rev Charlotte Gompertz, vicar of the church and familiar with three of the boys' families, has opened the church for prayer and reflection. She described the community's devastation, noting the constant influx of people lighting candles and seeking quiet reflection. The church is providing a space for lamentation and questioning in these difficult times. One mother expressed her profound grief, calling it a 'nightmare'. Rev Charlotte acknowledged the challenge of finding words to comfort the bereaved families, emphasising prayer and the church's role in supporting the community's grief. A police investigation into the deaths is under way.

Pray: for comfort and peace to those in sorrow. May they know Your loving embrace. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/grieving-community-turns-to-church-for-solace-after-four-teenagers-killed-on-camping-trip

Ofsted: 'contract' between parents and teachers is broken

England's education watchdog, Ofsted, has warned of a significant deterioration in the 'social contract' between families and schools, a situation where parents ensure their children attend school regularly and respect school policies. In her final report, Ofsted's chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, highlighted issues including lower attendance, poor behaviour, and increased friction between parents and schools. She cited a worrying shift in attitudes since the pandemic, with some parents challenging school policies more frequently. Government data show that over a fifth of pupils in England were persistently absent in the 2022/23 academic year, a notable increase from pre-pandemic levels. This trend is contributing to declining educational progress and outcomes. Additionally, schools are experiencing more disruptive behaviour, particularly low-level disruptions like backtalk and misuse of social media in class. Restoring the traditional relationship between schools and families is crucial but is expected to take years.

Pray: for a restoration of harmony and cooperation between families and schools. Pray for a return to good discipline and respect in the classrooms. (Proverbs 22:6)

More: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12783245/Ofsted-social-contract-parents-childrens-teachers-broken-behaviour-pupils-classrooms.html

Net migration reaches new record in 2022

The UK experienced a record net migration increase in 2022, with figures revised to 745,000 for the year ending in December, up from a previous estimate of 606,000. This surge is partly attributed to an influx of overseas professionals in sectors like the NHS and care homes. Labour criticised the government's handling of immigration, pointing to the high number of asylum seekers in hotels and a significant increase in visas issued to skilled workers. Asylum seeker figures remained stable, with 76,000 applications and 56,042 people in hotel accommodations. There was a notable decrease in small boat arrivals, especially among Albanians, though the reasons for these fluctuations remain unclear. Enver Solomon from the Refugee Council emphasised the genuine need for protection among asylum seekers and urged against the Rwanda deportation plan, advocating instead for community integration and support for refugees. In a new development, immigration minister Robert Jenrick has put forward to No 10 proposals aimed at reducing the level of immigration: [see https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67515674](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67515674)

Pray: for guidance for our leaders in displaying compassion, solace, and justice for migrants and refugees. (Leviticus 19:34)

More: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/nov/23/net-migration-to-uk-hit-record-745000-in-2022-revised-figures-show

Europe

The Netherlands: controversial far-right party wins most seats

Geert Wilders, a controversial populist leader in Europe, is poised for victory in the Dutch general election. His Freedom Party (PVV), which, amongst other things, advocates bans on mosques, the Quran, and Islamic headscarves in government buildings, secured 37 out of 150 seats in the Dutch parliament. This marks a significant achievement in his career, which has primarily focussed on criticising Islam and mainstream politics. This unexpected win has positioned the PVV as a prominent political force. The left-wing coalition under Frans Timmermans came second with 25 seats, while the ruling VVD, led by outgoing prime minister Mark Rutte, won a disappointing 24 seats. The election signifies a drastic shift from the previous poll two years ago when PVV won only 17 seats. Despite Wilders' success, many remain sceptical about his ability to form a coalition and become the Dutch prime minister due to his divisive rhetoric and extremist positions. The Netherlands is now poised for a complex negotiation to determine the country's leadership.

Pray: for the political parties as they negotiate to form a new government. Pray for the best possible outcome for the country. (Proverbs 16:9)

More: news.sky.com/story/netherlands-election-populist-geert-wilders-claims-victory-but-it-is-very-unlikely-he-will-become-prime-minister-13013986

Ukraine: Putin overlooks his role in starting the war

In an unexpected virtual appearance at the G20 summit, Vladimir Putin called on world leaders to 'stop the tragedy' of the war with Ukraine but bizarrely ignored his own role in starting the conflict. In February 2022, after weeks of growing aggression near the Ukrainian border, the Russian president ordered his forces into Ukraine. He claimed it was important to 'demilitarise' the country and made baseless neo-Nazi allegations about the Ukrainian government to justify the invasion. Ukraine has only agreed to peace negotiations if Russia agrees to hand back all of the land which it has illegally annexed since 2014 - including the Crimea peninsula, which Putin claims now belongs to Russia. He also broke international law by illegally annexing four other regions in eastern Ukraine in September 2022. In his G20 appearance, Putin also tried to deflect attention from the war by focusing on the conflict between Israel and Hamas, for which he has tried to position himself as a potential mediator.

Pray: that world leaders may know how to put more pressure to bear on Russia to bring an end to the war. (Proverbs 2:6)

More: www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/putin-forgets-role-in-ukraine-war-in-bizarre-g20-appearance_uk_655df344e4b0c91d827942e0

Ukraine: over 40,000 men have sought to avoid being drafted

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, almost 20,000 men have sought to escape being drafted, with some taking perilous routes like swimming across dangerous rivers. Also, over 20,000 men were apprehended by Ukrainian authorities while attempting to flee. Following the Russian invasion, men aged 18-60 were prohibited from leaving the country, but numerous individuals still manage to escape. Many of them flee to reunite with family abroad, pursue education, or seek employment opportunities. Of those caught attempting to escape, most tried to cross the border by walking or swimming, while 6,800 used fraudulent paperwork to claim fabricated exemptions. The 40,000-plus number of men who have fled or tried to flee could represent a significant proportion of the men Ukraine needs to replenish its army. In August, US officials estimated the Ukrainian military death toll to be up to 70,000 - although Kyiv won't give a figure. There are more than 800,000 in the Ukrainian armed forces.

Pray: for wisdom for all the men wondering whether to fight or flee and for the authorities in dealing with would-be deserters. Continue to pray for an end to the war. (Psalm 46:1)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-67120904

Worldwide

Ocean giants return to 'safe' tropical haven

Blue whales, Earth's largest creatures, have returned to a part of the Indian Ocean where they were once decimated by whaling. Researchers in the Seychelles captured footage of these magnificent creatures in 2020 and 2021. Recent underwater audio recordings of their hauntingly beautiful low-frequency songs throughout the year have revealed their prolonged presence, suggesting potential breeding activities. This rediscovery is hailed as a 'conservation win' after decades of commercial whaling, which severely reduced blue whale populations. The end of mass-scale hunting has allowed them to rebound; however, their numbers remain small, and they are still classified as endangered. The Seychelles' role as a habitat for blue whales is a cause for excitement and underscores the importance of conservation efforts.

Pray: for these magnificent creatures to be protected and to continue increasing in numbers. Pray for those seeking to conserve the wonders of God's creation. (Genesis 1:21)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-67496339>

Israel / Gaza: hostage deal, four-day pause

Israel and Hamas have struck a deal to exchange fifty hostages in Gaza for a four-day ceasefire. This agreement also includes the release of 150 Palestinian women and teenagers held in Israeli prisons and an increase in humanitarian aid for Gaza. The four-day pause came into effect on 24 November, with Israel offering to extend it even further if Hamas agreed to release more hostages. Joe Biden has welcomed the deal, hoping it will end the suffering of the hostages and alleviate the plight of innocent Palestinian families. Until the ceasefire, Israel continued the conflict, with at least 300 airstrikes within 24 hours: [see \(https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/no-gaza-hostage-release-will-start-before-friday-says-israel-2023-11-23/\)](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/no-gaza-hostage-release-will-start-before-friday-says-israel-2023-11-23/) Israel remains committed to its mission to eliminate Hamas and secure the release of over 200 hostages captured in October. Hamas sees this agreement as an opportunity for Palestinians to recover after enduring an intense Israeli military operation.

Pray: for peace in this troubled region, that the ceasefire holds, and that innocent lives are spared. May God's wisdom guide leaders to seek lasting solutions. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-67504553

DRC: UN peacekeepers agree to withdraw

After nearly two decades, the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Congo (MONUSCO) has signed an agreement to withdraw its 15,000 peacekeepers from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The foreign minister and MONUSCO's head finalised the deal, marking the end of a collaboration that struggled to bring lasting peace to eastern Congo, a region plagued by a long-standing conflict involving numerous armed groups, some backed by neighbouring countries. With upcoming elections in December, the conflict has taken centre stage, prompting the incumbent president Félix Tshisekedi, to call for the UN peacekeepers' accelerated withdrawal; the government has cited 'unsatisfactory results' to justify this request. Tensions between the UN mission and the local population have often flared, resulting in deadly protests. The exact timing of the withdrawal has not yet been agreed.

Pray: that this troubled country will know lasting peace in spite of the UN withdrawal. Pray for a good outcome to the forthcoming election. (Psalm 29:11)

More: www.africanews.com/2023/11/22/dr-congo-un-mission-to-withdraw-peacekeepers/

COP28 'moment of truth' for oil and gas industry

The global oil and gas industry faces a critical juncture at the upcoming UN climate talks (COP28), according to Dr Fatih Birol, the head of the International Energy Agency (IEA). She emphasised that the sector must make a pivotal choice between exacerbating the climate crisis or actively contributing to its resolution. Last year, fossil fuel companies allocated a mere 1% of global investment to renewable energy. At COP28, the IEA intends to exert pressure on participating governments to agree on measures for reducing fossil fuel usage. Dr Birol stressed that a successful transition to clean energy necessitates reduced demand for oil and gas, requiring the scaling back of fossil fuel operations. Meeting climate goals involves embracing carbon capture technology while simultaneously reducing emissions, but currently carbon capture capacity worldwide is insufficient to meet these objectives. The fossil fuel industry, although a major investor in carbon capture and storage, is being strongly criticised for its inadequate investment in renewable energy.

Pray: for the fossil fuel agencies to make responsible choices for a sustainable future. (Genesis 2:15)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-67445233

India: rescue operation for trapped tunnel workers close to success

A rescue operation to free 41 Indian tunnel workers, trapped for twelve days in the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand state, has reached its final stage. Rescuers are just metres away from the workers, and stretchers and ambulances are on standby. The tunnel collapsed during a landslide on 12 November. The trapped men, although free to move around and supplied with food and drink, have been suffering from various ailments, including headaches, nausea, anxiety, and depression. Psychiatrists have been monitoring their mental health and advising activities like yoga and conversations to maintain morale. The oldest worker, who has been in a similar situation before, has been encouraging the others to keep their confidence high. As the rescue nears completion, there are hopes that they will very soon be released from their ordeal. However, there has been anger about how long the rescue operation has taken.

Pray: for the operation to have a successful conclusion, and for all the workers to be rescued and restored both physically and mentally. (Psalm 34:17-18)

More: www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/uttarakhand-uttarkashi-tunnel-collapse-rescue-updates-b2452121.html

Mexico: grief and suspicion at the murder of a prominent non-binary judge

The killing of Jesus Ociel Baena, a prominent Mexican non-binary activist, has triggered widespread grief within the LGBTQ community, leading to candlelight vigils across the country. Many participants waved rainbow flags as they lashed out at the ongoing insults and violence faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in Mexico. Baena and their partner, Dorian Nieves, were discovered dead in their home in Aguascalientes state. Baena had suffered multiple lacerations from a razor, including a likely fatal one to the neck. Preliminary evidence suggested the possibility of Nieves committing the murder and subsequently committing suicide, but Baena's father has rejected this theory. LGBTQ+ rights advocates pointed out that Baena had been threatened due to their activism and called for a careful, unbiased investigation to explore every possibility. Aguascalientes, known for its conservative values, had witnessed Baena breaking barriers as the first non-binary person as a state judge.

Pray: for the LGBTQ+ community in Mexico to be given greater recognition of their rights. Pray that Baena's death will be thoroughly investigated. (Psalm 9:9)

More: www.reuters.com/world/americas/prominent-non-binary-mexican-activist-killed-with-blade-says-prosecutor-2023-11-14/

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Prayer Alert is produced in partnership with
The World Prayer Centre, PO Box 17971, Birmingham, B2 2NY, England.

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