

Prayer Alert

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See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and He rules with a mighty arm. See, His reward is with Him, and his recompense accompanies Him. (Isaiah 40:10)

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

Pray for the election in Ireland today, and in Mauritius tomorrow: [Insight Guide](#).

Invitation - to serve with the PA team!

How would you like to join our Prayer Alert team? We are a group of volunteers based in different parts of England. If you appreciate what we do and are confident with browsing the internet, discovering relevant articles and basic editing, 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.

May God bless and encourage you this year,

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert team.

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Praise Reports

USA: Thanksgiving Day worship services

Thanksgiving Day in the USA often brings families together for meals, sports, and festivities, but for many, it's also a day of worship. Churches nationwide, including the National Cathedral in Washington DC, host special Thanksgiving services. The cathedral, known for its stunning altar decorations, draws hundreds to its annual service. Spokesman Kevin Eckstrom hopes this year's observance will promote unity in a divided nation, reminding attendees to focus on God's gifts and cultivate gratitude. 'We all have something to be grateful for', he remarked. Reeds Mill Church, nestled in the Maine woods, offers a nostalgic, hymn-filled service in its one-room, 1892-built sanctuary. This year's message, 'Jesus Comes to Dinner', reflects on Zacchaeus's encounter with Jesus and the call to generosity. Thanksgiving services remind believers to reflect on gratitude, unity, and God's abundant gifts.

Praise: God for His unifying gifts. Pray that Thanksgiving will foster gratitude, generosity, and Christ-like love in divided USA communities. (Psalm 107:1)

More: www.christianpost.com/news/churches-hold-thanksgiving-day-worship-services.html

Saudi Arabia: church growth surges despite challenges

In Saudi Arabia, a nation historically closed to the Gospel, Christianity is growing faster than the global average. Despite strict bans on evangelism and the threat of severe punishment, including execution for apostasy, underground churches thrive, with some estimating Christians could represent up to 10% of the population. Oswald Magdangal, who pastored an underground church for eleven years, reports remarkable growth, particularly among younger Saudis. The secret congregations include native Saudi believers, with some becoming pastors. Recent reforms under Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman have softened the kingdom's religious rigidity, including curbing the religious police and allowing Bible printing. Testimonies like Ahmed Joktan's, who encountered Jesus in a dream, and the bravery of Christian tentmakers and underground leaders highlight the Spirit's work in this challenging environment. Revival stirs as Christians boldly share their faith, while global prayers continue to support this growth. Oswald's own story of near execution in 1992 underscores the resilience of faith under persecution, inspiring hope for the church's future.

Praise: God for His power to grow His church in the hardest places despite persecution and opposition. Pray for the worldwide persecuted church to continue to flourish. (Matthew 16:18)

More: www.godreports.com/2024/11/church-growing-in-saudi-arabia-faster-than-global-average/

British Isles

Calls for a general election challenge Government's leadership

Just five months after Labour's election victory, a petition demanding a fresh general election has reached nearly 2.8 million signatures, triggering a parliamentary debate set for 6 January. The petition accuses the Labour government of breaking campaign promises. High-profile figures like actor Michael Caine and entrepreneur Elon Musk have fuelled the petition's momentum. Despite claims of possible non-UK signatories, the House of Commons is confident the majority are legitimate British citizens or residents. Keir Starmer dismissed calls for a new election, attributing dissatisfaction to tough budget decisions, such as inheritance tax changes, loss of winter fuel payments for pensioners, and new VAT on private school fees. He emphasised his focus on governance, stating, 'That isn't how our system works'. The debate will test the Government's response to public discontent and its ability to regain voter trust amidst growing pressure.

Pray: for godly discernment for Keir Starmer and his government, and a rebuilding of public trust amidst political discontent and economic challenges. (Proverbs 29:2)

More: www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1981600/general-election-petition-debate-date-parliament-commons

Gun crime in London rises by 30%

Gun crime in London has surged by nearly 30%, impacting areas once considered safe. The recent shooting of an eight-year-old girl in Ladbroke Grove highlights the escalating violence linked to gang rivalries. Community leaders attribute the rise to recently released prisoners returning to their communities with unresolved conflicts. High-crime areas are seeing younger individuals recruited into gang activities, including carrying weapons. The surge in gun-related incidents has placed immense pressure on Scotland Yard, which faces severe budget cuts of £450 million, potentially reducing the police force by two thousand officers. Mayor Sadiq Khan emphasises efforts like the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), which has funded 350,000 opportunities for youth and contributed to a reduction in homicides and stabbings. Initiatives such as youth worker programmes in hospitals and police custody aim to prevent reoffending and exploitation. Organisations like The Children's Society are working to protect vulnerable children through education, awareness campaigns, and collaborative efforts to tackle the root causes of violence, offering hope for a safer future.

Pray: for protection, especially over vulnerable youth, restoration of peaceful communities, and lasting solutions to end violence and exploitation. (Romans 12:21)

More: www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/gun-crime-london-ladbroke-grove-shootings-chris-kaba-kensington-chelsea-gangs-b1196552.html

Mystery drones over US air bases in England

Sixty British troops have joined the United States Air Force (USAF) to investigate a series of unidentified drones spotted flying over three bases in Suffolk and Norfolk. The incidents have raised concerns about security, although the drones have not been deemed hostile. The bases play crucial roles in US military operations. USAF has confirmed multiple sightings during nighttime hours, but no source or intent has been identified. The Ministry of Defence emphasised robust security measures at all defence sites, and both British and US authorities are closely monitoring the situation to ensure the safety of personnel and infrastructure. Efforts to determine the origin and purpose of the drones continue.

Pray: for wisdom and protection for investigators, safety for military personnel, and resolution of security threats. (Psalm 18:2)

More: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/drones-us-air-base-suffolk-uk-usaf-b2653914.html

MPs support new bill aiming for phased smoking ban

MPs have overwhelmingly backed a new Tobacco and Vapes bill aimed at phasing out smoking by making it illegal for anyone aged fifteen or younger today to ever purchase cigarettes. Originally proposed by the Conservatives, the bill was advanced by Labour and passed its first Commons vote with a majority of 415 to 47. It also seeks to curb youth vaping through advertising bans, packaging restrictions, and flavour limitations. Health secretary Wes Streeting described it as a landmark public health intervention aimed at preventing addiction, reducing NHS pressures, and fostering a healthier population. Despite broad support, some MPs, including Kemi Badenoch and Suella Braverman, opposed the bill, citing concerns over civil liberties. Others questioned the practicality of age-based restrictions and the potential expansion of outdoor smoking bans. Proponents argue the measures address tobacco's uniquely harmful and addictive nature, aiming to create a smoke-free generation and protect youth from nicotine addiction. Further scrutiny in Parliament is expected before the bill becomes law.

Pray: for effective public health policies that protect young generations, promote health, and uphold personal freedoms responsibly. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2lwjrdj1lo

Britain's 'spiritual desert' and obesity crisis

Former MP Jacob Rees-Mogg has addressed Boris Johnson's claim linking Britain's obesity crisis to the Church of England's focus on anti-colonialism. He noted the nation's obesity issues but stopped short of directly blaming the Church. Johnson had argued that Britons are 'gorging themselves' on consumerism, likening it to 'living bread' but detached from spiritual nourishment, referencing Matthew 4:4. Rees-Mogg described Johnson's comments as highlighting a deeper issue: Britain's spiritual void. One comment was that Johnson's analysis was an 'imaginative exercise' rather than a causal connection. Both men agreed that mainline denominations are not adequately addressing this spiritual hunger. Rees-Mogg emphasized the need for churches to proclaim Christ's love more fervently to fill the void. This discussion sheds light on the perceived spiritual and moral challenges facing the UK, which may lead churches to re-evaluate their role in addressing societal needs.

Pray: for revival in Britain's churches, that they may boldly share Christ's love and meet spiritual hunger. (Matthew 5:6)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/jacob-rees-mogg-britain-spiritual-desert-boris-cofe-obesity-crisis

Inspirational teen photographer dies after brave cancer battle

Liz Hatton, a 17-year-old photographer from Harrogate, has died after a courageous battle with a rare cancer (sarcoma). Despite her terminal diagnosis, Liz inspired the nation by completing an ambitious photography bucket list, capturing moments like a royal investiture and a West End musical. Her work gained recognition when she met the Princess of Wales, who invited her to Windsor Castle to photograph an event and bonded with her over their shared love of photography. Liz's resilience and creativity shone as she continued working despite immense physical pain, hosting a photography exhibition shortly before her passing. Her family remembers her as a brave and compassionate young woman who lived fully in her final months. A Just Giving page has been established in her memory to fund research into her rare cancer. Liz's story and photographs remain a powerful legacy, inspiring hope and awareness about sarcoma.

Pray: for Liz's family as they grieve, that they find comfort and strength in her inspiring legacy. Pray for researchers to find a cure for this rare cancer. (Psalm 34:18)

More: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14133877/liz-hatton-photographer-cancer-dies.html

Europe

France: Pelicot rape trial reaches its conclusion

The landmark trial in Avignon, involving the systematic drugging and rape of Gisèle Pelicot by 49 men orchestrated by her ex-husband Dominique Pelicot, has gripped the nation. The prosecution has sought a twenty-year sentence for Pelicot, who admitted to facilitating the assaults over nearly a decade, and 10-18 years for most co-defendants. The case has sparked national debates on consent, male violence, and systemic legal shortcomings. Prosecutors have highlighted Pelicot's bravery in waiving her anonymity and allowing graphic evidence to be shown, confronting societal shame surrounding sexual violence. Feminist activists have rallied in support, condemning the accused and demanding justice. Defence lawyers, however, argue that many defendants were misled by Pelicot's claims of his wife's consent. The trial has renewed calls for legal reforms, and Michel Barnier's government has pledged new measures to combat violence against women. One commentator said: 'This trial has affected every one of us. What have we done wrong as a society to produce men who are capable of such inhumane behaviour?'

Pray: for justice, healing, and societal change to protect victims of sexual violence. (Proverbs 31:8)

More: www.france24.com/en/europe/20241127-pelicot-trial-there-s-no-such-thing-as-ordinary-accidental-involuntary-rape

Ukraine: massive Russian attack on energy infrastructure

On 27 November Russia launched a massive, coordinated strike on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, hitting cities nationwide with waves of drones and missiles. This marks the second large-scale attack on Ukraine's energy facilities this month, compounding fears of a harsh winter ahead. Emergency power cuts were introduced as damage to civilian infrastructure was reported in many regions, leaving over a million people without power. Ukrainian officials warned of preemptive power cuts to protect the grid from overloads as temperatures continue to drop. The attacks are part of a broader strategy, with over 1,500 strikes reported this week. Ukrainian officials fear Russia aims to cripple the country's power grid, a tactic used in previous winters. Russia has also deployed a new type of missile to strike the city of Dnipro, in response to Ukraine launching UK-supplied missiles into Russian territory. For an analysis of the recent developments in the war, see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgxly3nzwpo>

Pray: for protection, endurance, and peace for Ukrainians facing renewed hardships. (Psalm 9:9)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy15lp2113o

Romania: unexpected result in first round of presidential election

Unexpectedly, the presidential election in Romania has seen nationalist independent Calin Georgescu leading the first round. A 62-year-old expert in sustainable development, he calls for a Romania based on small-scale organic agriculture, Christian values, and national sovereignty. His platform, similar to that of Robert F. Kennedy Jr, emphasises self-reliance and reduced dependence on international alliances. Georgescu's rise is partly attributed to his pledge to 'restore Romania's dignity' and challenge perceived subservience to organisations like NATO and the EU. His criticism of the US-backed missile shield at Deveselu, which he calls a 'diplomatic embarrassment', echoes the Kremlin narrative, raising concerns among Western allies. If elected, he could alter the country's foreign policy and reshape its political landscape.

Pray: for Romania's leadership to pursue integrity, sovereignty, and peaceful global relations. (Psalm 33:12)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqlrw4np55zo

Worldwide

COP29: how much was achieved?

Developed nations at the COP29 summit in Baku committed to mobilising at least \$300 billion annually for developing countries by 2035 to address climate change. However, this figure fell far short of the \$1.3 trillion per year which had been demanded, leaving many deeply dissatisfied. The agreed amount includes contributions from private investment, but critics argue it lacks ambition and clarity. Tensions flared during chaotic negotiations, with India and Nigeria accusing the presidency of forcing the deal without proper consensus. Decisions on transitioning away from fossil fuels, highlighted in last year's 'global stocktake', were deferred to COP30, but a milestone was achieved with the completion of Article 6 on carbon markets, finalising the Paris Agreement framework nearly a decade after its inception. The summit's outcomes were overshadowed by Donald Trump's reelection and his pledge to withdraw the USA from the Paris Agreement. Also, host Azerbaijan, which sources two-thirds of its revenue from fossil fuels, faced accusations of conflict of interest and malpractice during the conference. For in-depth analysis of what happened, see the weblink.

Pray: for unity and bold action among nations to combat climate challenges. (Micah 6:8)

More: www.carbonbrief.org/cop29-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-baku/

Lebanon: Israel / Hezbollah ceasefire comes into effect

A ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah, brokered by the USA, began on 27 November, with thousands of displaced people cautiously returning to southern Lebanon. The truce calls for a sixty-day withdrawal period for Israeli forces and Hezbollah fighters from southern Lebanon, with the Lebanese army deploying extra troops in the region to oversee the ceasefire and reclaim control. However, Israeli officials have warned that any breaches by Hezbollah would prompt immediate military action. Hezbollah claimed 'victory' in its first statement since the ceasefire, vowing readiness to confront Israeli actions. The conflict, which began in October 2023 but has escalated since September, has devastated Lebanon, with over 3,800 killed and nearly 16,000 injured. Caretaker prime minister Najib Mikati has called for unity after what he said was the 'most cruel phase in Lebanese history'. For a view on how this truce might affect the conflict in Gaza, see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/27/israels-ceasefire-with-lebanon-makes-peace-in-gaza-ever-less-likely>

Pray: for lasting peace and protection for all affected by the Israel-Lebanon conflict. Pray that the ceasefire will hold, and remember those returning to their homes. (Matthew 5:9)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/27/israel-hezbollah-ceasefire-holds-as-un-chief-sees-ray-of-hope

Pakistan: Imran Khan's supporters in clashes with police

Supporters of Imran Khan have staged protests in Islamabad demanding his release, defying a government lockdown, road barricades, and internet blackouts. On 26 November they clashed with security forces, leading to several deaths, injuries, and mass arrests. The protesters, led by Khan's wife and party leaders, faced heavy police resistance, including tear gas and road blockades. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party accused authorities of using excessive force, while the government reported security personnel sustained bullet injuries. At least six deaths, including four security officials, were reported. Hundreds were arrested as the authorities tried to prevent the protests, which have now been called off by the PTI leadership. Imran Khan has been in jail for over a year and faces dozens of criminal charges ranging from corruption to leaking state secrets, all of which he and his party deny. His supporters are demanding judicial reforms as well as his release.

Pray: for peace, justice, and unity amidst political unrest and division. (Romans 13:1a)

More: edition.cnn.com/2024/11/26/asia/pakistan-protests-imran-khan-islamabad-explainer-intl-hnk/index.html

South Africa: hundreds of illegal miners holed up underground

The authorities have arrested fourteen individuals, including a wounded teenage boy, after they emerged from an illegal gold mine in Stilfontein, where hundreds of miners remain trapped underground. The miners, called zama zamas, search abandoned mines for gold, often risking arrest, deportation, or violence. Operating in over six thousand defunct mines, they endure dangerous conditions, relying on contractors for food and supplies. This underground economy is dominated by criminal syndicates which exploit the miners, sometimes forcing them to work under threat. Efforts to remove the miners include blocking shafts and restricting supplies. Officials estimate 350-400 miners remain underground, but some reports put the number at as much as four thousand. The government is looking at ways of getting the miners out, but fears of poisonous gases and armed syndicates are complicating rescue plans.

Pray: for safety, justice, and restoration for trapped miners, and for wisdom for officials. (Psalm 82:4)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/26/south-african-miners-trapped-underground-whats-the-latest

Myanmar: ICC issues arrest warrant for military leader

The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor plans to seek an arrest warrant for Myanmar's military leader, Min Aung Hlaing, for crimes against humanity in the alleged persecution and forced deportation of Rohingya Muslims. Over 730,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar for Bangladesh in a campaign described by the UN as having 'genocidal intent'. The military junta denies the accusations, insisting that it has been targeting terrorists. This is the ICC's first request for an arrest warrant against a high-ranking Myanmar official, with further applications anticipated. Its investigations have been hampered by Myanmar's lack of cooperation and the escalating turmoil in the country since the 2021 military coup. Human Rights Watch says this is 'an important step toward breaking the cycle of abuses and impunity which is a key factor in fuelling the military's mass violations'. The ICC's move comes amid huge criticism over its recent arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu, Yoav Gallant, and a Hamas leader: see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly2exvx944o>

Pray: for justice, peace, and protection for persecuted Rohingya communities. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: www.channelnewsasia.com/world/icc-prosecutor-arrest-warrant-myanmar-military-leader-min-aung-hlaing-4773706

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