

Prayer Alert

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The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him. (John 1:9,10)

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

Pray for the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana (7 December): [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.

Praise Reports

[Iran: released from death sentence](#)
[300 global leaders adopt 'Madrid Commitment'](#)

British Isles

[A 'Black Friday' as assisted suicide bill is passed](#)
[Starmer pledges 13,000 more police with vows on NHS and schools](#)
[Business confidence sinks after tax-raising budget](#)
[World entering a new nuclear age, head of armed forces warns](#)
[UK buys 5m doses of bird flu vaccine](#)
[Irish elections: what happens next?](#)

Europe

[France: government collapses in no-confidence vote](#)
[France: Notre Dame reopens after restoration](#)

Worldwide

[South Korea: president faces impeachment after failed declaration of martial law](#)
[Syria: rebel forces capture Aleppo, now targeting Hama](#)
[Israel: soldiers refusing to serve in Gaza](#)
[Namibia: first-ever woman president elected](#)
[USA: Biden pardons his son, Trump appoints Jared Kushner's father](#)

Praise Reports

[Iran: released from death sentence](#)

Marziyeh Amirizadeh spent her first 33 years under a restrictive regime that curtailed freedoms following the 1979 revolution. Raised as a Muslim, she experienced a profound spiritual transformation after encountering God in a dream, leading her to embrace Christianity. Despite the severe risks, Marziyeh and her friend Maryam began evangelising in Tehran, distributing Bibles and sharing Jesus' love. Their activities attracted the attention of authorities, and in 2009 they were arrested and sentenced to death by hanging for apostasy and promoting Christianity. Initially confined in an underground dungeon, they endured inhumane conditions, but throughout their imprisonment Marziyeh held on to the promise of Matthew 10:19, which assures believers that the Spirit will provide words in times of persecution. Their unwavering faith and international advocacy eventually led to their release. Her story is a testament to steadfast faith amid persecution.

Praise: God for Marziyeh's unwavering faith; pray for strength for persecuted Christians worldwide. (Matthew 5:10)
More: <https://www.womanalive.co.uk>

[300 global leaders adopt 'Madrid Commitment'](#)

The VI Transatlantic Summit, hosted by the Political Network for Values (PNfV) in Spain, united 300 global leaders from 45 nations to launch the Madrid Commitment. This initiative presents a decade-long action plan defending freedom, family, and the culture of life, emphasising Christian principles and universal values as essential to national well-being. Key proposals include defending human dignity and life from conception to natural death, fostering family stability through policy, and promoting a culture that celebrates life. Leaders also encouraged governments to adopt the Geneva Consensus Declaration, supporting women's health and protecting life, while reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The summit, supported by groups like the Heritage Foundation, reinforced PNfV's mission to advocate for life, family, and freedom worldwide.

Praise: God for global leaders defending Christian values. Pray for wisdom about how to uphold family, life, and freedom. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
More: www.christianpost.com/news/global-leaders-adopt-madrid-commitment-in-defense-of-freedom.html

British Isles

A 'Black Friday' as assisted suicide bill is passed

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill passed its second reading in Parliament, with 330 votes in favour and 275 against. Described as a 'Black Friday', this decision represents a grave shift in Britain's stance on the sanctity of life, prioritising personal autonomy over protection for the vulnerable. Critics argue the bill endangers the disabled, terminally ill, and impoverished, who may face coercion or feel societal pressure to end their lives. CARE and other opponents emphasise the risks of this legislation. They point to evidence from countries like Canada, where economically disadvantaged individuals are disproportionately affected by assisted suicide laws. While proponents see the bill as progress, opponents like Danny Kruger MP warn that it undermines human value by equating worth with utility. The bill will now move to committee stages, with further debates in the House of Lords. Despite this setback, Christians are called to pray, advocate for the vulnerable, and trust in God's sovereignty over life and death. See <https://premierchristian.news/us/news/article/bishop-britain-no-longer-christian-country-assisted-dying>

Pray: for God's intervention to protect the vulnerable and uphold the sanctity of life. Pray for our nation to preserve its biblical foundations. (Proverbs 31:8)

More: care.org.uk/news/2024/11/a-black-friday

Starmer pledges 13,000 more police with vows on NHS and schools

Keir Starmer has announced a bold 'Plan for Change', prioritising increased neighbourhood safety, improved NHS services, education reforms, and economic growth. Central to this vision is the pledge to recruit 13,000 additional police officers, police community support officers, and special constables across England and Wales. Starmer emphasised the importance of visible, community-based policing to restore trust and reduce fear. The plan also addresses NHS waiting lists, aiming to improve access to healthcare. Education reforms focus on early childhood development, ensuring children start school prepared to learn. Additionally, Starmer highlighted a commitment to clean energy, aiming to make Britain a green energy superpower by 2030. Addressing broader issues, Starmer pledged improvements in living standards, housing development, and stricter immigration controls. He criticised past governments for 'sticking plaster' politics, vowing lasting change through strategic, measurable goals.

Pray: for wisdom and integrity for leaders implementing policies that prioritise safety, justice, and community well-being. (Psalm 82:3)

More: www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/keir-starmer-pledges-13000-more-34250645

Business confidence sinks after tax-raising budget

UK business confidence has fallen to its lowest level since the early days of the Covid pandemic, according to the Institute of Directors (IoD). November's economic confidence index dropped to -65, the lowest since April 2020's record low of -69. This follows the government's autumn budget, which introduced £40 billion in tax increases, including £25 billion from higher national insurance contributions (NICs) for employers. Business leaders warn these measures will hinder private sector growth, with many firms anticipating reduced investment and workforce cuts. UK hospitality businesses have voiced concerns about closures and reduced investment due to the NIC hikes. IoD chief economist Anna Leach criticised the budget for undermining economic foundations and damaging businesses' ability to grow. Chancellor Rachel Reeves defended the budget as necessary for stabilising public finances. The IoD hopes upcoming announcements on industrial strategy, infrastructure, and tax reform will boost economic prospects. See <https://moneycheck.com/bank-of-england-boe-signals-four-interest-rate-cuts-for-2024-as-inflation-declines/>

Pray: for God's guidance over economic policies, ensuring they support businesses, families, and national stability. (Psalm 147:6)

More: www.theguardian.com/business/2024/dec/01/uk-business-confidence-at-lowest-level-since-pandemic-after-tax-raising-budget

World entering a new nuclear age, head of armed forces warns

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, Chief of Defence Staff, has warned of a new, more complex nuclear age. He highlighted the growing threats posed by nuclear proliferation and the erosion of global agreements controlling their use. He cited Russia's provocative actions, including simulated nuclear attacks on NATO countries, as well as China's expanding nuclear arsenal, Iran's nuclear ambitions, and North Korea's advancing ballistic missile program. Radakin described the 'third nuclear age' as marked by multiple, concurrent threats and the absence of robust security frameworks. This contrasts with the Cold War's defined blocs and subsequent disarmament efforts. He emphasised the critical role of the UK's nuclear deterrent, particularly its continuous-at-sea submarines, in influencing Russia's behavior. While stating that a direct Russian attack on the UK or NATO remains unlikely due to effective deterrence, Radakin urged vigilance and strengthened defense strategies. He called for national resolve in confronting these escalating security challenges. See <https://news.sky.com/story/british-army-would-be-destroyed-in-six-months-to-a-year-in-a-major-war-minister-warns-13266702>

Pray: for protection and discernment for UK and global leaders navigating rising nuclear threats and pursuing lasting peace. (Isaiah 2:4)

More: news.sky.com/story/world-entering-a-new-nuclear-age-head-of-armed-forces-warns-13266960

UK buys 5m doses of bird flu vaccine

The Government has secured over five million doses of a bird flu vaccine to prepare for potential human transmission of the H5N1 virus, despite no current evidence of such spread. The vaccine is part of broader efforts to enhance the nation's pandemic preparedness. Bird flu remains primarily a threat to birds, but certain strains, including H5N1, have been linked to human infections. Symptoms range from flu-like illnesses to more severe complications like conjunctivitis. The vaccine will only be deployed if human transmission begins. Public health minister Andrew Gwynne stressed the government's commitment to safeguarding public health through proactive measures. Health agencies are actively monitoring avian influenza in humans, birds, and animals, contributing to global understanding and response strategies against the virus.

Pray: for effective strategies to prevent pandemics, protect lives, and strengthen global health preparedness. Pray for the scientists to remain one step ahead of these virus threats. (Psalm 91:3)

More: www.itv.com/news/2024-12-03/uk-buys-more-then-5m-doses-of-bird-flu-vaccine-in-case-of-any-possible-pandemic

Irish elections: what happens next?

Ireland's general election has set the stage for coalition negotiations to form the next government. Fianna Fáil emerged as the largest party with 48 seats, followed by Sinn Féin with 39 and Fine Gael with 38. With 88 seats needed for a majority, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael are expected to renew their coalition, perhaps with support from independents or smaller parties. Micheál Martin, leader of Fianna Fáil, is poised to return as Taoiseach under the coalition's rotation agreement. Fine Gael, led by Simon Harris, will likely alternate leadership roles during the government's five-year term. Despite Sinn Féin's gains, the other parties have ruled out collaboration with them. Negotiations will center on policies like enterprise, EU relations, and home ownership. Meetings and talks are expected to last for weeks, with the Dáil returning on 18 December. Ministers will remain in caretaker roles until a coalition agreement is finalised, likely in early 2025.

Pray: for unity, integrity, and God's guidance in Ireland's leadership as they navigate coalition negotiations. (Psalm 33:12)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cg7r93rex4po.amp

Europe

France: government collapses in no-confidence vote

Prime minister Michel Barnier has been ousted in a historic no-confidence vote, leading to the collapse of his government. The motion follows his controversial use of special powers to pass a budget without parliamentary approval. The budget, which aimed to reduce the deficit by €60 billion, faced criticism from both the left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) and far-right National Rally (RN); Marine Le Pen, RN leader, called it 'toxic for the French'. This has plunged France into deeper political instability; no new parliamentary elections can be held until July, so the current deadlock in the Assembly - where no group has a working majority - is set to continue. Barnier, appointed by Emmanuel Macron just three months ago, has presented his government's resignation, but will continue for now in a caretaker capacity. Macron's presidency remains intact, but pressure on him is mounting.

Pray: for stability, wisdom, and unity in France's leadership during this crisis. (Mark 3:24)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdxz934p56qo

France: Notre Dame reopens after restoration

Notre Dame Cathedral is set to reopen on 7 December, after a five-year restoration following the devastating 2019 fire. Ceremonies will blend tradition and modernity, including a symbolic door-striking ritual led by Archbishop Laurent Ulrich and a solemn Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. (8 December). The restored cathedral features a mix of Gothic preservation and contemporary updates, such as a new altar and reliquary, sparking debate but garnering widespread admiration. Restoration efforts exceeded funding goals, totaling €700 million, and Paris anticipates a renewed influx of visitors. Somewhat surprisingly, Donald Trump will be there, joining nearly fifty world leaders: security will be tight, with 6,000 personnel deployed. Conspicuously absent, however, is Pope Francis, whose refusal to attend has fuelled speculation about the Vatican's priorities. As Notre Dame prepares to welcome the faithful once again, its reopening symbolises resilience and the enduring significance of sacred spaces.

Pray: for spiritual renewal and unity as Notre Dame reopens to the world. (Psalm 127:11a)

More: zenit.org/2024/12/04/trump-to-visit-paris-to-attend-reopening-of-paris-notre-dame-cathedral/

Worldwide

South Korea: president faces impeachment after failed declaration of martial law

South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol faces political turmoil after his controversial declaration of martial law on 3 December triggered calls for impeachment and police investigations into alleged insurrection. Opposition lawmakers accuse him of abusing power to suppress dissent under the guise of countering North Korea. The impeachment motion, set for a Saturday vote, requires a two-thirds majority in parliament, with opposition parties needing eight votes from Yoon's ruling People Power Party (PPP) to pass. The martial law declaration, made during a late-night televised address, sparked immediate backlash. Armed troops attempted to block parliament but were repelled. Critics called the declaration unconstitutional. Yoon's actions have divided his party and drawn widespread criticism. If he were to be impeached, the constitutional court would determine the outcome; prime minister Han Duck-soo could act as interim leader.

Pray: for peace, accountability, and restoration of public trust in leadership in South Korea. (Proverbs 29:2)

More: www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/05/south-korea-updates-martial-law-yoon-suk-yeol-impeachment-kim-yong-hyun

Syria: rebel forces capture Aleppo, now targeting Hama

Buoyed by their lightning capture of Aleppo and swathes of northern Syria, rebel forces – led by Islamist factions – are now targeting the strategically important town of Hama. This offensive, ending four years of relative calm in the region, has already displaced nearly 50,000 people, with many fleeing nearby towns. Over 600 people, including 104 civilians, have been killed to date. Hama is a former stronghold of anti-Assad sentiment; its capture would 'pose a threat to the regime's popular base'. The Syrian military say that sizeable reinforcements have arrived to bolster the defence of Hama, with Russian air support. Abandoned military equipment along roads highlights the intense clashes. As winter deepens the plight of displaced civilians, the renewed violence underscores Syria's enduring humanitarian crisis, drawing international appeals for peace.

Pray: for displaced families' protection, provision, and an end to Syria's suffering. (Psalm 9:9)

More: www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20241203-syria-insurgents-capture-four-towns-in-push-south-as-government-forces-retake-areas-near-aleppo

Israel: soldiers refusing to serve in Gaza

Yuval Green, a 26-year-old Israeli reservist and medic, answered the call to defend his country after the devastating Hamas attack in October 2023. Witnessing the aftermath in Gaza, he encountered unimaginable horrors, including civilian devastation and dehumanisation within his ranks. These experiences have led him and 165 other Israeli reservists to publicly refuse military service unless hostages held in Gaza are released and to call for a ceasefire. The refusal highlights growing dissent in Israel, where a poll shows 45% favour ending the war to recover the hostages, contrasting with 43% supporting continued conflict to eliminate Hamas. Diminished national unity and reports of burnout among troops exacerbate challenges. Yuval's decision came after orders he found morally indefensible, reflecting broader tensions within Israeli society about the war's direction and ethical concerns over military actions.

Pray: for moral clarity and compassionate resolution amidst Israel's profound internal challenges. (Romans 12:21)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yx56ep165o

Namibia: first-ever woman president elected

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, 72, has been elected Namibia's president, becoming the country's first female leader. She secured 57% of the vote, avoiding a predicted run-off. Declaring her win as a mandate for 'peace and stability', Nandi-Ndaitwah continues her SWAPO party's 34-year dominance since the country's independence. However, opposition parties have disputed the results, citing technical issues such as ballot shortages and extensions of voting periods. Long queues left some voters waiting up to twelve hours, and critics claim that these problems violated election laws. The main opposition candidate, Panduleni Itula, who trailed with 25.5%, described the election as 'neither free nor fair'. Nandi-Ndaitwah's political journey began in the 1970s independence movement, followed by a 1990 parliamentary debut and several ministerial roles. Despite SWAPO's legacy, growing youth discontent highlights challenges ahead as Namibia grapples with unemployment and inequality.

Pray: that the new president will govern justly, seek reconciliation, and pursue unity and economic equality. (Luke 12:48b)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/3/namibia-elects-nandi-ndaitwah-as-countrys-first-woman-president

USA: Biden pardons his son, Trump appoints Jared Kushner's father

Joe Biden has granted a full pardon to his son Hunter Biden, who faced sentencing for gun charges and federal tax evasion. Hunter had been convicted of lying on a federal gun purchase form in 2018 by denying his drug addiction and had pleaded guilty to failing to pay \$1.4 million in taxes, which he later repaid with interest and penalties. The pardon, ahead of Hunter's scheduled sentencing dates, cancels both convictions. Biden described the charges as politically motivated and unfair, arguing that similar offences often result in non-criminal resolutions. He condemned the justice department's pursuit of his son, attributing it to congressional opponents' pressure. Hunter's legal troubles, including struggles with addiction, have been a focus of considerable scrutiny over the past five years. Meanwhile, Donald Trump, who granted a total of 144 pardons in his first term of office, has appointed one of those who were pardoned (his son-in-law's father, Charles Kushner) to be US ambassador to France: [see https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/12/02/trump-pardoned-during-first-term/76705964007/](https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/12/02/trump-pardoned-during-first-term/76705964007/)

Pray: for healing, justice, and the restoration of trust in politics and politicians. (Psalm 106:3)

More: news.sky.com/story/president-biden-issues-pardon-for-his-son-hunter-13265098

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