

Prayer Alert

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By day the Lord directs His love; at night His song is with me. (Psalm 42:8a)

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

Pray for the 23 council elections and six mayoral elections taking place on 1 May: for details, [see](#)

Please also pray for the Australian federal elections taking place on 3 May. More [HERE](#) from Canberra Declaration: See also the [2025 elections prayer guide](#).



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We invite the Prayer Alert community to join us on the free online Interseed House of Prayer app where we are praying and sharing thoughts on the weekly prayer guide issues and themes.

Interseed is available on the Android and iOS platforms. More info [HERE](#).

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.

David Fletcher and the Prayer Alert team.

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Praise Reports

[Argentine pastors' personal experiences working with Pope Francis](#)

The death of Pope Francis has sparked reflection among church leaders in Argentina who knew him personally. Evangelical pastor Alejandro Rodríguez described him as 'a pastor with the smell of sheep', deeply connected with the people. Legendary evangelist Luis Palau considered him a friend, despite theological differences, praising Francis's humility and respect for the Bible. During his time as archbishop and pope, Francis built bridges with Evangelical leaders, supporting Bible engagement and championing unity. He collaborated on projects like the Community Bible Experience and encouraged Catholics to read Scripture. His personal gestures, such as serving others and breaking protocol, left a lasting impression. While not all Evangelicals agreed with his views or reforms, many respected his sincerity, humility, and service to the poor. Many church leaders have expressed sorrow and praised his legacy of service and openness to inter-church dialogue. His life invites reflection on the importance of unity without compromise and the shared mission of lifting high the name of Jesus. [See https://www.christianpost.com/news/a-testament-to-hope-christians-react-to-death-of-pope-francis.html](https://www.christianpost.com/news/a-testament-to-hope-christians-react-to-death-of-pope-francis.html)

Praise: God for the faithful witness and example of Pope Francis, who fostered humility, unity, and a deep love for Scripture. (Romans 12:10)

More: www.christianpost.com/news/argentine-evangelical-pastors-share-memories-of-pope-francis.html

'It just ignited': revival in California church

Pastor Shane Idleman of Westside Christian Fellowship has reported a remarkable outpouring of revival in his congregation. The awakening appears to have been sparked by a sermon he delivered on 30 March, in which he shared vulnerably about personal struggles in ministry. This heartfelt honesty resonated deeply with his church, igniting an atmosphere of repentance, worship, and spiritual hunger. Idleman emphasises that revival must be grounded in sound doctrine, describing it as a spiritual resuscitation that transforms lukewarm hearts into ones burning with passion for God. He witnessed spontaneous worship, extended prayer times, and a strong desire among congregants to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The following week, services continued without a sermon, as the congregation was drawn into powerful praise and intercession. He is quick to note that true revival cannot be manufactured; it is a sovereign move of God upon a prepared people. The seeds were planted years ago through faithful prayer and teaching. Now, the church is experiencing the fruit of that long-standing hunger for awakening.

Praise: God for sovereign revival fire igniting churches through humility, sound doctrine, prayer, and spiritual hunger for Jesus. Revive Your Church, Lord! (Psalm 85:6)

More: www.faithwire.com/2025/04/21/it-just-ignited-pastor-says-revival-is-breaking-out-in-his-california-church/

British Isles

Pressure builds on UK finances as Reeves pushes for US trade deal

The Government borrowed £151.9 billion in the year to March, up £20.7 billion from the previous year, raising concerns about the nation's financial stability. The figures, revealed as Rachel Reeves visits Washington to negotiate a trade deal with the USA, come amid mounting pressure to cut public spending or increase taxes in order to meet her strict borrowing rules. Reeves has insisted that borrowing will not fund daily spending, but economists warn that sluggish growth, rising interest rates, and looming US tariffs could force her hand. Economists predict tax hikes may be necessary, especially if a trade agreement with the USA cannot be reached. Meanwhile, the IMF downgraded the UK's 2025 growth forecast from 1.6% to 1.1%, citing inflation, borrowing costs, and trade disruptions. Despite higher tax revenues, debt interest rose to £4.3 billion in March, the highest since the 1960s. Both political and economic leaders are scrutinising every area of government spending, while critics blame the borrowing spike on poor fiscal management and short-sighted policies.

Pray: for righteous governance, financial responsibility, and wise negotiations that protect UK livelihoods and uphold biblical integrity. (Proverbs 11:14)

More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly59dy4x7ko

Birmingham bin strike resolution 'in touching distance'?

A resolution to Birmingham's ongoing bin strike may be near, as the conciliation service Acas is set to join negotiations for the first time. The dispute, led by over 350 members of the Unite union, began on 11 March over pay concerns and threats of job and salary cuts, resulting in thousands of tonnes of uncollected rubbish and public health warnings across the city. Unite's general secretary Sharon Graham stated that while a deal is 'in touching distance', the city council has been inconsistent in its public versus private positions. The union has tabled workable proposals, but insists the council must now act decisively. Earlier this month, workers overwhelmingly rejected a revised offer, saying it failed to prevent potential pay cuts for 200 drivers. Meanwhile, the Government deployed military planners and additional support to clear an estimated 26,000 tonnes of waste. Communities minister Jim McMahon confirmed levels are now 'approaching normal'. Talks continue, with both sides under pressure to resolve the dispute swiftly to restore services and public confidence in the city's leadership.

Pray: for calm, fairness, and breakthrough in negotiations to restore peace, protect workers, and serve the city well. Pray against any potential health or environmental effects of this dispute. (Matthew 5:9)

More: news.sky.com/story/birmingham-bin-strike-resolution-could-be-in-touching-distance-as-conciliation-service-drafted-in-13354350

Charities warn of record child poverty if two-child benefit cap not scrapped

Leading UK charities are urging Keir Starmer to urgently scrap the two-child benefit cap, warning it could push child poverty to record levels by the end of this parliament. A letter signed by organisations such as Barnardo's, Save the Children, and Citizens Advice has told the Government that removing the cap is the most cost-effective measure to reduce poverty. The two-child limit, introduced in 2017, restricts child tax credits and universal credit to the first two children in most households. Critics argue this penalises larger families and disproportionately affects low-income homes. The End Child Poverty Coalition predicts the long-awaited child poverty strategy may not appear until June, while the Child Poverty Action Group estimates child poverty could rise from 4.5 million to 4.8 million children by 2029. Scrapping the limit could lift 350,000 children out of poverty overnight and lessen the severity for 700,000 more. While the Scottish government has pledged to mitigate the policy, nationwide reform remains uncertain and urgently needed.

Pray: for compassionate leadership to defend vulnerable children and uphold justice in policy decisions affecting families. (Psalm 82:3)

More: www.itv.com/news/2025-04-22/charities-warn-of-record-child-poverty-if-two-child-benefit-cap-not-scrapped

Navy's flagship on mission to Far East, 'defying' China

The Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Prince of Wales, has set sail from Portsmouth for an eight-month mission to the Far East as part of Operation Highmast, a major multinational military deployment. Leading a strike group composed of British, Canadian, and Norwegian warships, the carrier will demonstrate the UK's naval strength, support global trade routes, and affirm alliances in the Indo-Pacific region. While the Ministry of Defence has not confirmed whether the fleet will pass through the contested Taiwan Strait, the mission comes amid rising tensions with China over Taiwan and territorial claims in the South China Sea. Commodore James Blackmore affirmed that the task force is prepared for all eventualities and seeks to deter threats through presence and readiness. Families gathered to bid farewell to the 2,500 service members on board. The deployment also serves diplomatic, economic, and symbolic purposes: supporting NATO, promoting UK exports, and showcasing national defence capabilities. This show of force, blending strategy with solidarity, reflects the UK's commitment to peace, stability, and the rules-based international order.

Pray: for protection, courage, and righteousness for all deployed, and for peace to prevail in global conflicts. (Psalm 29:11)

More: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14634773/royal-navy-hms-prince-wales-deployment-far-east.html

Starmer close to EU arms deal - at the expense of fishermen

The UK is nearing a pivotal defence and trade agreement with the EU that could grant British arms companies access to a €150 billion European defence fund. In return, Keir Starmer's government appears ready to concede on fishing rights - an issue that has stirred strong domestic opposition. The arrangement includes freezing fishing quotas and moving to a multi-year deal, rather than annual negotiations, in exchange for wider EU market access for UK defence firms. Critics argue this trade-off risks sacrificing the UK fishing industry's post-Brexit gains. The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations has labelled the deal 'neocolonial', with significant UK quotas already owned by foreign boats. Still, the economic contrast is stark: defence exports total £14.5 billion annually, compared to £1.7 billion in fish sales. The summit on 19 May is expected to formalise broader EU cooperation, including defence partnerships, dynamic alignment on food standards and emissions, and a debated youth mobility scheme. Starmer insists these moves are strategic steps toward global stability, security, and economic resilience amidst growing international challenges.

Pray: for discernment in UK leadership to prioritise righteousness over profit and preserve national sovereignty and integrity. (Proverbs 16:8)

More: www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/starmer-close-to-eu-arms-deal-at-the-expense-of-fishermen-fwckp5btr

ME sufferers feel 'invisible and ignored' as review shows 62% increase in cases

A new NHS review has revealed that an estimated 404,000 people in England suffer from Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome - a 62% increase from previous figures. The condition disproportionately affects middle-aged women, who are six times more likely to be diagnosed than men, and shows stark disparities across regions and ethnic groups. White individuals are nearly five times more likely to be diagnosed, and in many deprived areas, ME is underdiagnosed or entirely unrecorded. The condition, characterised by post-exertional malaise, brain fog, pain, and exhaustion, has long been misunderstood and underfunded. A national review was prompted by the 2021 death of 27-year-old Maeve Boothby O'Neill, who was left malnourished and unable to speak after years of medical neglect. Her case led to a coroner's unprecedented 'prevention of future deaths' report, demanding urgent reforms in ME care and research. Medical experts and charities are calling for improved training, diagnostic tools, and funding to address this silent health crisis. The NHS, NICE, and government-backed bodies are now reassessing care standards, research, and education for ME across the UK.

Pray: for compassionate reform in healthcare, accurate diagnoses, and greater care for those suffering silently with chronic illness such as ME. Pray for a breakthrough in the research into ME / CFS. (Psalm 41:3)

More: www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/sufferers-feel-invisible-ignored-nhs-35096650

Europe

Ukraine: Trump's one-sided peace proposal

The USA has presented Ukraine with a controversial one-page peace framework, described as Donald Trump's 'final offer', which would grant significant concessions to Russia, including recognition of its occupation of Crimea and of territories which it has captured since the war began. In exchange, Ukraine would receive vague security guarantees, economic aid, and partial territorial returns. The plan also proposes that the USA would operate Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant and distribute its electricity output between the two countries. Sources say Kyiv views the proposal as heavily skewed in Moscow's favour. Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, drafted the deal after a lengthy meeting with Putin, who has shown interest in freezing current battle lines. However, European leaders remain skeptical of Putin's sincerity, and critics argue that the deal sacrifices core Ukrainian interests for political expediency. Volodymyr Zelensky has drawn further harsh criticism from Trump for refusing to countenance the loss of Crimea: [see](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c78jx68d922o) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c78jx68d922o> The war continues, with the worst Russian attack on Kyiv in months: [see](https://www.ft.com/content/86a540d0-e598-4ac7-9df0-f05a262a0932) <https://www.ft.com/content/86a540d0-e598-4ac7-9df0-f05a262a0932>

Pray: for peace grounded in justice, not compromise which abandons the oppressed. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: www.axios.com/2025/04/22/trump-russia-ukraine-peace-plan-crimea-donbas

EU imposes fines on two US firms

The EU has fined Apple €500 million and Meta €200 million under the Digital Markets Act (DMA), its first enforcement action against Big Tech under the new law. Apple was penalised for limiting access to alternative apps, while Meta's 'consent or pay' model for data usage was deemed to offer users inadequate choice. Both firms have reacted angrily, with Apple accusing the EU of endangering user privacy, and Meta claiming it is being unfairly targeted compared to European and Chinese companies. Though these are relatively small fines for these tech giants, the move signals the EU's intent to hold even powerful firms accountable. Experts see the ruling as a test of sovereignty in digital regulation, but US firms argue that the EU is unfairly shaping their business models. US-EU tensions are mounting, especially after Donald Trump's recent tariffs on European goods. The UK and other nations are launching parallel investigations into monopolistic practices.

Pray: for just leadership in global commerce that values truth and legality over power. (Proverbs 11:1)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm248vzg9jwo

Worldwide

Catholic Church: after Francis, who?

As preparations are made for Pope Francis's funeral, there is already much speculation about who might succeed him, a risky process as supposed 'front-runners' are seldom elected. Also, Francis' appointments of many new cardinals have complicated analysis. Among possible contenders are Pierbattista Pizzaballa, a Middle East expert with minimal ties to Vatican politics, and Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's secretary of state, a seasoned diplomat known for fostering relations with China and Vietnam. From Africa, Fridolin Ambongo was a close advisor to Francis, though he is conservative on key issues. Luis Antonio Tagle of the Philippines, dubbed the 'Asian Francis', is pastoral and inclusive, while Matteo Zuppi of Italy has been active in peace efforts and LGBTQ+ pastoral outreach. Conservative voices back Peter Erdo of Hungary, known for his scholarly and traditionalist stance. Lastly, Anders Arborelius, Sweden's first cardinal, advocates unity in a polarised world while defending traditional doctrine. The choice will reflect whether the Church wishes to continue Francis' legacy or change direction.

Pray: for divine guidance in choosing a shepherd after God's own heart. (Jeremiah 3:15)
More: www.nytimes.com/2025/04/21/world/europe/next-pope-francis-candidates.html

World leaders plan to attend Pope's funeral in spite of previous differences

As tributes flood in for Pope Francis, attention turns to his legacy of engaging controversial issues such as migration, climate change, and global conflict – and therefore clashing with world leaders. Notably, Francis clashed with Donald Trump over immigration, denouncing his border wall and mass deportation policies. Tensions also emerged with Argentina's Mauricio Macri and Javier Milei; Milei even called Francis 'evil', but softened his tone after taking office. The Pope also criticised Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro over Amazon deforestation and championed Indigenous rights. On Gaza, Francis condemned Israel's military actions, suggesting possible genocide – a statement that drew harsh rebukes from Israeli officials. He also condemned the Ukraine war without naming Vladimir Putin directly, while urging dialogue. His 'white flag' comment upset Ukrainian leaders. Yet many world leaders – including Trump, Milei, and Zelensky – plan to attend the funeral, honouring a pontiff who never shied from challenge.

Pray: giving thanks for the Pope's willingness to speak out courageously against injustice. Pray that other church leaders will know how to follow his example. (Proverbs 31:8,9)
More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/22/not-just-trump-which-world-leaders-did-pope-francis-clash-with

Earth Day: highlighting different types of pollution

To celebrate Earth Day (22 April), environmental activists gathered at a beach in Cape Town to clean the coastline and raise awareness about plastic pollution. Organiser Lyniel Traut called for a 60% reduction in plastic production by 2040, urging corporations to both act and educate. Another activist said she wanted her children and grandchildren to grow up in a safe, pollution free, environment. Earth Day also spotlighted hidden plastic pollution from synthetic clothing. Rachael Z Miller, founder of the Rozalia Project, explained how polyester garments shed microfibres which end up in oceans, harming marine life and potentially entering the human food chain. To combat this, she has developed the Cora Ball – a laundry tool which reduces fibre shedding and captures microplastics before they reach waterways. Though helpful, such tools are just a start: the UN has urged the textile industry to shift towards a more sustainable production model to reduce its climate impact. See <https://www.africanews.com/2025/04/22/earth-day-fighting-microfibre-pollution-one-laundry-at-a-time/>

Pray: for clean oceans and bold hearts to protect God's creation. Pray for other creative ways of protecting the environment. (Psalm 24:1)
More: www.africanews.com/2024/04/23/south-africa-activists-clean-up-cape-town-beach-in-celebration-of-earth-day/

Kashmir: 26 killed in terrorist attack

A brutal terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir has left 26 people dead, including tourists and locals, and sent shockwaves across India. On 22 April gunmen opened fire at a popular resort in Pahalgam, targeting visitors gathered at Baisaran meadow. Among the victims were an Indian naval officer on his honeymoon, a tourist guide supporting his family, and multiple members of one family vacationing together. Eyewitnesses report that some attackers questioned victims about their religion before opening fire, although motives remain unconfirmed. Survivors and families describe scenes of chaos, loss, and unthinkable grief. Locals fear the attack could devastate tourism-dependent livelihoods. Kashmir's streets fell silent as businesses shut in protest, while Indian leaders, including prime minister Modi, vowed a strong response. A manhunt is under way, and as families bury their dead and demand justice, the nation mourns a deep and painful wound. India has already closed the border with Pakistan, which has denied involvement with the terrorists, and there are fears that there will be further military escalation. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwynx7kgyqvo>

Pray: for comfort for grieving families and for an end to violent hatred. Pray that bad relations between India and Pakistan will not escalate further. (Psalm 140:1,2)
More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwynx7kgyqvo

USA: Hegseth under pressure after second Signal chat group blunder

According to an anonymous official, the White House is searching for a new Pentagon chief to replace Pete Hegseth, after claims that he shared classified military details via the Signal app with his wife, brother, and lawyer, potentially jeopardising operations in Yemen. This follows his error in March when he mistakenly included a journalist in a similar chat (<https://www.prayer-alert.net/en/pray/regions/worldwide/item/53684-usa-huge-criticism-after-security-breach-discussing-military-plans>). Donald Trump and press secretary Karoline Leavitt have publicly defended Hegseth, calling the uproar a media smear, and Hegseth has denied wrongdoing, blaming disgruntled ex-employees. Four senior Pentagon advisers have recently departed; three of them were forcibly removed for leaking information to the press, a charge they have denied. Senators have criticised both Hegseth's conduct and Trump's judgment in appointing someone lacking high-level leadership experience. Meanwhile, in another controversy, Trump has stated that he has no intention of firing Jerome Powell, chair of the Federal Reserve, even after calling him a 'major loser' for his refusal to cut interest rates. See <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/22/trump-jerome-powell-fed>

Pray: for integrity and discernment in those entrusted with national defence and power. (Proverbs 10:9)
More: www.npr.org/2025/04/21/nx-s1-5371312/trump-white-house-pete-hegseth-defense-department

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