

Prayer Alert

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Give praise to the Lord, proclaim His name; make known among the nations what He has done, and proclaim that His name is exalted. (Isaiah 12:4)

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

Please also pray for the elections taking place in Romania, Poland and Portugal on 18 May, and for special elections in the USA on 20 May. See also the [2025 elections prayer guide](#).



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

[Two thousand Iranians turning to Jesus every day](#)

Over two thousand Iranians are reportedly turning to Christ each day, according to the Bible Society. Despite the severe risks in a nation where leaving Islam can carry a death sentence, underground Christianity is flourishing. One 92-year-old woman evangelises on public transport by inviting strangers to help her read the gospels: many end up taking home a New Testament. This quiet revival is not only drawing Iranians to Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, but also transforming their attitudes toward Israel and the Jewish people, long depicted as enemies by Iran's regime. Formerly steeped in antisemitism, many new believers now intercede for Israel, praying for peace between the two nations. Amid growing persecution, the gospel is advancing, fulfilling prophetic scripture and reshaping hearts even within regions historically opposed to God's people. This movement coincides with increased Christian engagement among British youth and raises hope amid cultural hostility. The spiritual battle is intensifying - but so too is the light of Christ in dark places.

Praise: God for Iran's growing underground church and love for Jesus and Israel amid persecution and darkness. (Psalm 83:18)

More: www.godreports.com/2025/05/two-thousand-iranians-turning-to-jesus-every-day/

'I should be dead': actor's miracle survival

Christian actor Jesse Hutch has shared his remarkable survival story after nearly drowning during a whitewater rafting accident. While working as a guide in his college years, Hutch was pulled underwater into a powerful current known as the 'green room'. Trapped and unable to surface, he eventually blacked out after water filled his lungs. He was under water between 11 and 22 minutes, so by medical standards he should have died. Yet, miraculously, he survived with no major damage. Hutch describes the moment of surrender as filled with divine peace, saying, 'I completely surrendered ... and it was the most peace I ever felt.' This life-altering experience deepened his walk with God, instilling a lasting lesson: he is not in control—God is. Following the incident, Hutch felt an unexpected call into the acting world, a path he had never pursued but now sees as part of God's purpose. His testimony is a powerful reminder of God's sovereignty and grace, even in moments when all seems lost.

Praise: the Lord for His miraculous power to rescue, restore and direct our lives according to His purpose. (Psalm 18:16)

More: www.faithwire.com/2025/05/09/i-should-be-dead-actor-praises-god-after-defying-odds-with-miracle-survival/

'I have no fear', says singer with cancer

Brad Arnold, lead singer of the rock band 3 Doors Down, has publicly revealed his battle with stage-four clear cell renal carcinoma, a cancer that has metastasised to his lungs. Despite the grave diagnosis, Arnold's response is one of unshaken faith and peace. In a heartfelt video message, he declared, 'We serve a mighty God and He can overcome anything... I have no fear.' He has cancelled his summer tour to begin treatment and humbly asked fans for prayer. Arnold has used his platform to share the Gospel boldly in concert settings, often reminding audiences that the messages of worthlessness perpetuated by society are lies. 'You are enough... because Jesus Christ loves you', he told fans during a recent show. His testimony continues to inspire many, and his story is a compelling call to pray, believe, and speak hope in life's darkest trials.

Praise: God for Brad's fearless faith and bold witness. May God heal, strengthen, and uphold him powerfully. (Isaiah 41:10)

More: www.faithwire.com/2025/05/08/i-have-no-fear-3-doors-down-singer-announces-stage-4-cancer-delivers-bold-message-call-for-prayer/

British Isles

UK economy expands at fastest pace in a year

The UK economy grew by 0.7% in the first quarter of 2025 - its fastest quarterly growth in over a year - beating Bank of England predictions. Growth was driven by strong performance in the services sector, especially retail, IT, advertising, and car leasing. Manufacturing also saw a 1.1% rise, while construction remained flat. Compared to last year, the economy is now 1.3% larger. Export activity also surged, with a 3.5% jump as traders raced to beat looming US tariffs. Despite this strong start, economists warn the momentum may be short-lived due to domestic tax increases and international trade pressures. Some of the early-year growth appears to have been brought forward ahead of rising business costs. While consumer confidence and easing interest rates offer hope, the Bank of England believes underlying growth may still be weak. The government remains cautiously optimistic, pointing to rising wages and a stronger-than-expected recovery, yet future growth may depend on global stability and wise economic governance.

Pray: for wise stewardship of the UK economy and sustained growth that blesses families, workers and businesses. Pray for families struggling on low incomes. (Deuteronomy 8:18)

More: www.thetimes.com/business-money/economics/article/uk-economy-news-gdp-latest-ons-hvc39zw67

More inmates released early to stop prisons running out of space

The Government is set to release over 1,000 recalled inmates early in an effort to relieve severe overcrowding in prisons. Offenders serving one to four-year sentences who breached licence conditions, but did not reoffend, will now be released after 28 days without parole board assessment. Justice secretary Shabana Mahmood said the move, alongside a £4.7 billion prison-building plan, is necessary to prevent the system from collapsing, with England on course to run out of male prison spaces by November. Critics argue the policy puts public safety at risk. Victims' advocates warned that the policy could endanger lives, especially where abusers are concerned. The justice ministry faces growing pressure to reform sentencing, with recommendations for expanded use of community-based alternatives expected soon. However, many argue that without stronger investment in probation, mental health services, and preventative support, early release schemes alone will not solve the crisis. See also <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14708955/Criminals-freed-jail-sentences-new-plans-Mahmood-Gauke.html>

Pray: for justice reforms that uphold safety, protect victims, and restore lives through mercy and accountability. (Proverbs 21:15)

More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce80nl1k0p3o

GPs split over assisted dying plans, says BBC

A BBC survey of over a thousand family doctors reveals sharp divisions among GPs in England over proposed assisted dying legislation. About 500 opposed the law, calling it dangerous, unethical, and a threat to patient trust. Concerns included coercion, guilt among patients feeling burdensome, and the sanctity of life. Others warned that better palliative care should be prioritised over legalising assisted death. Over half cited religious beliefs as a key reason for opposition. Conversely, around 400 GPs supported the bill, often citing personal trauma from witnessing painful deaths and arguing for dignity and patient autonomy. Supporters described the proposal as humane and overdue, with many wanting the choice for themselves or loved ones. Nearly 300 GPs would assess patient eligibility if the law passed. However, over a quarter of all respondents admitted difficulty in reliably predicting life expectancy - central to the proposed law's safeguards. As Parliament prepares to debate the bill, questions remain over ethical boundaries, medical responsibility, and protecting the vulnerable amid calls for better end-of-life care. See and also <https://news.sky.com/story/assisted-dying-law-unworkable-unaffordable-and-naive-says-partnership-of-uks-leading-social-care-groups-13367847>

Pray: for compassion, moral clarity, and protection for the vulnerable as Parliament considers end-of-life legislation. (Psalm 139:16)

More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8e6ww5036go

DWP crackdown to hit 150,000 PIP claimants

Major changes to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) system are set to affect hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people across the UK. The Government's welfare reform, due to begin in 2026, will raise the threshold for eligibility for the daily living component of PIP - a benefit that supports individuals with disabilities and their carers. Under the new system, claimants must score at least four points in one assessed activity to qualify. By 2029/30, around 800,000 people are expected to lose this benefit, with 150,000 also losing their carer's allowance. Critics say that these reforms prioritise cost savings over care and compassion. Veteran MP Diane Abbott described the legislation as 'cruel and misconceived', warning that it will push disabled individuals into further hardship and fear. With weekly payments of up to £110.40 at stake, the changes could leave many struggling to cope financially and emotionally. Disability campaigners and church leaders are calling for justice, dignity, and adequate provision for society's most vulnerable.

Pray: for compassion-driven policies which protect the disabled and uphold the dignity of every life entrusted to us. (Proverbs 31:8,9)

More: www.gbnews.com/money/dwp-crackdown-pip-claimants-benefit-payments-cut

France accused of encouraging people-smuggling

Fresh controversy has erupted after video footage emerged showing French border officers handing life jackets to migrants mid-Channel, fuelling claims that France is aiding illegal crossings rather than preventing them. The footage, captured by migrants, shows a French patrol vessel approaching a small migrant boat and supplying safety vests. Critics, including Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp and former Border Force chief Tony Smith, argue this action undermines UK-funded efforts to stop smuggling and sends the wrong message to those attempting the journey. Smith insists that if the French can approach boats at sea, they should redirect them back to French shores. With over 11,500 crossings recorded by early May (up 35% from last year), the Government faces mounting pressure to resolve the crisis. Officials stress that life jackets are distributed based on safety assessments, but the video has triggered strong political backlash. The Home Office reaffirmed its goal to dismantle smuggling networks exploiting vulnerable people for profit, as calls grow for firmer preventative measures.

Pray: for wisdom and cooperation between England and France to protect lives and uphold justice amid the growing migration pressures. (Proverbs 24:11)

More: www.express.co.uk/news/world/2051716/france-people-smugglers-life-jackets-migrants-channel

Process of appointing next Archbishop of Canterbury an 'omnishambles'

The Church of England's process to appoint the next Archbishop of Canterbury has been described as an 'omnishambles'. Following Justin Welby's resignation, the post has been vacant since January. Although an announcement was expected this autumn, the appointment may now be delayed due to three vacant positions on the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC), which must be filled by elected members from the Diocese of Canterbury. Complications arose when the General Synod changed eligibility rules mid-process, introducing gender and clergy-lay balance requirements. This disqualified several previously nominated individuals and enabled the selection of others who had received little or no diocesan support. Critics argue that the diocese applied new rules incorrectly, bypassing normal procedures. Despite the confusion, the CNC hopes to maintain its original timetable, with key meetings scheduled for May, July, and September. A recent public consultation on the future Archbishop received nearly ten thousand responses, reflecting widespread interest and concern over this pivotal appointment in the Anglican Communion.

Pray: for unity, wisdom, and Spirit-led discernment as the Church seeks its next Archbishop. (James 3:17)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/delays-in-appointing-next-archbishop-of-canterbury-due-to-vacant-cnc-positions

Europe

Ukraine / Russia: delegations arrive in Istanbul, but not Putin

Peace efforts between Russia and Ukraine took a cautious step forward as Russian delegates arrived in Istanbul on 15 May for proposed negotiations. Volodymyr Zelensky had invited Vladimir Putin to meet in person, but Putin declined, appointing aide Vladimir Medinsky to lead Russia's delegation. The absence of top Russian officials, including foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, cast doubt on Moscow's seriousness. Ukraine, emphasising the need for high-level talks, questioned the format and substance of the meeting. Zelensky said he would decide Ukraine's response after seeing Russia's true intentions. Ukraine and its allies had urged an unconditional ceasefire from 12 May, a proposal Moscow ignored. Donald Trump, who at one stage expressed interest in attending, will not participate, though Marco Rubio, Steve Witkoff, and NATO secretary Mark Rutte could do so. The situation remains fluid, with uncertainty surrounding whether the talks will lead to meaningful de-escalation or remain another missed opportunity.

Pray: for a good outcome to the peace talks in spite of Putin's absence. May they proceed with sincerity, courage, and a foundation of truth. (Proverbs 12:20)

More: kyivindependent.com/russian-delegation-arrives-in-istanbul-for-peace-talks-with-ukraine-as-putin-skips-meeting/

EU: court rules against EC refusal to release text messages to Pfizer

The EU General Court has ruled that the European Commission failed to justify its refusal to release text messages between Ursula von der Leyen and Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla regarding Covid-19 vaccine contracts. The case, brought by the New York Times, has been described as a landmark in institutional transparency. The EC had argued that texts are too ephemeral for official documentation, but the court rejected this, stating that all communication must be treated as potentially subject to public access. Critics, including the EU Ombudsman, had said that the secrecy risked favouring private interests over public welfare. Previous attempts to obtain vaccine contract details had also been met with redactions and resistance. Reacting to the decision, one commentator said, '(It is) everyone's win as this judgment is set to lead greater accountability of EU leaders' actions'.

Pray: that integrity will always govern leaders' choices, and for greater transparency and accountability. (Ephesians 5:11)

More: www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/05/14/commissions-pfizer-gate-loss-hailed-as-victory-for-transparency

Worldwide

Gaza: UN relief chief describes horrendous conditions

In an address to the Security Council, UN emergency relief coordinator Tom Fletcher warned that Gaza's 2.1 million residents are enduring famine-like conditions after a ten-week aid blockade. He condemned the ongoing displacement of civilians, destruction of hospitals, and systematic denial of humanitarian access by Israel, urging immediate global intervention to prevent genocide. Fletcher described Israel's alternative aid delivery proposal as a 'cynical sideshow, a deliberate distraction, and a fig leaf for further violence and displacement'. He said that humanitarian agencies have the capability and verification systems to deliver aid responsibly, but are being obstructed. While the International Court of Justice reviews genocide allegations, Fletcher warned such action may come too late. He appealed to Israel and Hamas: 'Will you act - decisively - to prevent genocide and to ensure respect for international humanitarian law? Or will you say instead, "we did all we could?"'

Pray: for Mr Fletcher's appeal to be heard. Pray that compassion will overcome politics, and for justice for Gaza's afflicted. (Proverbs 24:11)

More: news.un.org/en/story/2025/05/1163206

India / Pakistan: ceasefire, with conflicting claims of 'victory'

Following a deadly attack in Indian-administered Kashmir on 22 April, military tensions between India and Pakistan escalated rapidly, culminating in cross-border missile strikes and drone attacks. The conflict nearly led to all-out war, but a US-announced ceasefire on 10 May halted the fighting. Both nations claim victory: India points to deep strikes into Pakistan's Punjab region, while Pakistan touts the downing of Indian jets, confirmed by foreign sources. Analysts suggest that both sides gained and lost strategically. India achieved a rare reach into Pakistan's heartland for the first time since 1971, while Pakistan successfully internationalised the Kashmir issue, welcoming external mediation. The ceasefire's legitimacy is disputed: India insists it was bilateral, while Pakistan credits the USA. Talks between military officials have followed, but Narendra Modi has warned the ceasefire is only a 'pause'. It would not take much for hostilities to flare up again.

Pray: that hostility will give way to truth, accountability, and lasting regional reconciliation. (Romans 12:18)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/14/what-did-india-and-pakistan-gain-and-lose-in-their-military-standoff

Middle East: Trump seals a deal with Saudi Arabia, lifts sanctions on Syria

Donald Trump began a Middle East tour with major policy and economic announcements, including lifting long-standing US sanctions on Syria - a country rebuilding after civil war and regime change. The move, which follows a request by Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, signals a dramatic policy shift. Trump also unveiled a \$600 billion Saudi investment commitment in the USA and signed a record-breaking \$142 billion arms agreement with Riyadh. The visit prioritised economic cooperation over security concerns and featured meetings with top US business leaders and Saudi officials. The deals, on energy, defence, and infrastructure, could eventually total \$1 trillion. Trump praised bin Salman but avoided any mention of the 2018 Khashoggi killing. He also reaffirmed a hard stance against Iran, offering conditional diplomacy. His broader goal: to realign regional power structures, bolster US business, and isolate Tehran while pushing for eventual Arab-Israeli cooperation.

Pray: for righteous leadership and peace to rise amid shifting alliances. (Daniel 2:21)

More: www.reuters.com/world/trump-starts-gulf-visit-seeking-big-economic-deals-2025-05-13/

Burkina Faso: Africa's youngest leader

Captain Ibrahim Traore, Africa's youngest leader at 37, is gaining attention across the continent for his defiant rhetoric of pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, and youth empowerment. Since seizing power in a 2022 coup, Traore has distanced Burkina Faso from France and ECOWAS, aligning instead with fellow coup-led nations Niger and Mali. His image, recently plastered over Russian state media when he visited Moscow, resonates with African youth disillusioned with older leadership and stalled democracies. However, behind the populist appeal, the country's security has deteriorated sharply. Attacks from both government forces and jihadists have killed over 7,200 people in the past year - more than double the pre-coup toll. With 60% of the country beyond state control, millions are displaced or need aid. Yet for many, Traore's revolutionary language reflects real frustrations with Western influence and entrenched corruption, making him a symbol of resistance - however flawed.

Pray: for wise and peaceful government in Burkina Faso. Pray also that Africa's youth will seek truth over charisma, and justice over empty revolution. (Proverbs 12:22)

More: www.africanews.com/2025/05/14/africas-youngest-leader-divides-opinion-over-russia-ties/

Uruguay: beloved former president dies

Jose 'Pepe' Mujica, Uruguay's beloved former president and leftist rebel, has died at 89 after battling throat cancer. Revered for his humility, Mujica led Uruguay from 2010 to 2015, promoting civil liberties, legalising same-sex marriage and marijuana, and pushing for green energy reform. His decision to live in a simple farmhouse rather than in the presidential palace, and to drive around in an old Volkswagen Beetle, earned him the nickname 'the world's poorest president'. Once a member of the armed Tupamaros movement, Mujica spent years in solitary confinement during Uruguay's military dictatorship. Following the country's return to democracy, he entered politics with the Broad Front coalition, rising to the presidency by age 74. His death prompted tributes from across Latin America, honoring his courage, simplicity, and hope. Though once a fighter, Mujica later championed peace, dignity, and selfless leadership. In his final interview, he faced death with serenity, saying, 'A warrior has the right to rest.'

Pray: for leaders to live humbly, serve sincerely, and act with eternal perspective. Give thanks for Pepe's example, and pray that other politicians might follow it. (Matthew 20:26)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/13/uruguays-jose-mujica-a-president-famed-for-sparse-living-dead-at-89

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