

Prayer Alert

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'My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to Me, because My name will be great among the nations', says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 1:11)

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

Please pray for national elections taking place in Venezuela and Suriname on 25 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

Alpha course record numbers

In 2024, Alpha International experienced its most fruitful year since launching in 1977, with over two million people worldwide participating in Alpha courses. The globally recognised programme, known for its welcoming small-group format and open discussions about faith, was delivered through more than 81,000 courses across 146 countries, supported by 43,000 churches and organisations. A significant milestone was the launch of the Alpha Youth Series in November, which quickly drew over 250,000 young participants across 53 nations. Remarkably, one-third of all attendees were under 25, signalling a growing hunger for spiritual truth among younger generations. The strongest regional growth occurred in Africa, where participation surged by 47%. CEO Miles Toulmin attributes Alpha's success to localised video content which allows people to hear the Gospel in their own language and context. With increasing numbers of young people seeking answers to issues like loneliness and mental health, Alpha continues to offer a space for spiritual encounter and gospel transformation in this season of Quiet Revival. [See <https://www.premierchristianity.com/opinion/3-reasons-why-were-confident-a-quiet-revival-is-taking-place/19427.article>](https://www.premierchristianity.com/opinion/3-reasons-why-were-confident-a-quiet-revival-is-taking-place/19427.article)

Praise: God for the global spread of Alpha and its impact on spiritually hungry young hearts. (Matthew 5:6)

More: <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/alpha-course-sees-record-participation-amid-quiet-revival>

Joe Rogan is 'attending church' consistently

Joe Rogan, the world's most listened-to podcaster, is regularly attending church and exploring Christianity with increasing openness, according to Canadian apologist Wes Huff. Huff, who appeared on Rogan's podcast in January for an in-depth discussion on Christianity and Scripture, confirmed ongoing communication and Rogan's consistent church attendance. Known for probing life's deepest questions, Rogan has recently expressed scepticism about atheistic explanations for the universe and said he finds the resurrection of Jesus more believable than the Big Bang theory. He has remarked, 'Jesus makes more sense', expressing personal resonance with the idea of a Creator and Redeemer. His shift reflects a wider resurgence of spiritual hunger, particularly among young people. Huff noted that teenagers are increasingly requesting Bibles, saying, 'All my friends are reading this thing'. A Gallup report confirms that the long-term decline in US religiosity has now stabilised. Though Rogan has not made a public profession of faith, his journey signals a significant cultural moment as high-profile voices express openness to Jesus and the Gospel message.

Praise: God for stirring hearts in unexpected places; may Joe Rogan find true faith in Christ. (Luke 19:10)

More: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/joe-rogan-is-attending-church-consistently-wes-huff-says.html>

British Isles

Starmer hails new UK-EU deal, but critics warn of 'capitulation'

Keir Starmer has announced a wide-ranging new UK-EU agreement covering trade, defence, youth mobility, and travel arrangements. Touted as part of a 'hat-trick' of international trade achievements alongside deals with the US and India, the agreement seeks to ease post-Brexit disruptions. Key measures include continued EU fishing access to UK waters until 2038, reduced border checks on food exports, and a new UK-EU defence and security pact. British holidaymakers will also benefit from increased access to e-gates and streamlined pet passport systems. Starmer said that this signals Britain is 'back on the world stage', with 'unprecedented access' to EU markets for a non-member state. However, the deal has been sharply criticised by Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch, who labelled it a 'total capitulation', claiming it compromises UK sovereignty. While welcomed by many as pragmatic progress, the deal's success will ultimately hinge on how it balances trade benefits with national self-determination. See <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/52211-britons-back-closer-relationship-with-europe-as-uk-and-eu-reset-relations>

Pray: that post-Brexit agreements will protect the UK's values while fostering peace, prosperity, and responsible partnership. (Psalm 33:12)

More: <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cx2jkz3d0drt>

Inflation at 3.5% as Bank of England debates pace of rate cuts

UK inflation surged to 3.5% in April, surprising economists and intensifying concerns over the Bank of England's strategy on interest rates. The rise follows months of falling inflation and comes amid steep household bill increases, particularly in energy and broadband costs. Huw Pill, the Bank's chief economist, had warned just a day earlier that rate cuts were being implemented too quickly, describing the return to stability as 'stuttering'. Pill voted against this month's rate cut, calling for a pause and slower reductions, while the Bank's monetary policy committee remained split. Some members wanted a deeper cut, while others, including Pill, argued for restraint due to stubborn underlying inflation and continued wage growth. Traders now expect fewer rate cuts in 2025 than previously hoped, disappointing mortgage holders and borrowers. With over 2,000 UK companies going bust in April - the highest since last summer - concerns are growing over financial pressures on households and businesses. The debate now centres on whether the Bank can tame inflation without stalling economic recovery or deepening insolvency risks.

Pray: for sound financial leadership that protects the vulnerable and promotes stability in these uncertain economic times. (Proverbs 30:8)

More: <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-14732745/Were-cutting-rates-quickly-Bank-Englands-chief-economist-issues-stark-warning-inflation.html>

Starmer announces U-turn on winter fuel payment cuts

Keir Starmer has announced a policy reversal on winter fuel payment cuts, following widespread criticism and internal party dissent. Over 10 million pensioners lost the payment (worth £200 to £300 a year) in 2024 after Labour started to means-test it. The Government originally limited eligibility to those receiving pension credit or income-related benefits, saving an estimated £1.4 billion. However, backlash from charities, unions, and local Labour members, along with poor local election results, prompted a reassessment. In a surprise announcement during Prime Minister's Questions, Starmer confirmed changes would be introduced in the autumn budget to allow more pensioners to qualify. Details remain unclear, including the revised eligibility threshold or whether changes will apply this winter. Former PM Gordon Brown supported the move, saying 'no pensioner should be forced into poverty.' Critics welcomed the U-turn but called for urgent clarity. With cost-of-living pressures and energy bills rising, many fear delays could leave elderly citizens vulnerable. Age UK urged ministers to ensure the revised policy protects those on low and modest incomes.

Pray: that compassion and justice guide all decisions affecting vulnerable pensioners and those struggling with energy costs. (Psalm 82:3)

More: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c93yy2x40e0o>

M&S cyber attack will cost £300 million

Marks & Spencer has confirmed that a major cyber attack will cost the company around £300 million, following significant disruption to its operations. The breach, traced to third-party access caused by 'human error', has impacted contactless payments, online orders, and in-store stock availability. Almost a month on, M&S is still unable to process online orders in its fashion, home, and beauty departments - losing an estimated £3.5 million per day in sales. Chief executive Stuart Machin stressed that the company had not underinvested in security, noting that other retailers such as Harrods and the Co-op have also faced similar attacks. The breach has also resulted in customer data theft, though no payment details or passwords were compromised. The Government has called the recent wave of cyber attacks a 'wake-up call' for UK industry, warning of the need for greater resilience amid growing digital threats.

Pray: for strengthened cyber protections and wisdom for leaders defending critical infrastructure and business operations. Pray that the perpetrators will be brought to justice. (Proverbs 22:3)

More: <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-05-21/marks-and-spencer-says-cyber-attack-likely-to-cost-300m-and-last-till-july>

NHS launches world-first gonorrhoea vaccine

NHS England will become the first health system in the world to offer routine vaccination against gonorrhoea, as infections reach record highs. Targeting those most at risk, primarily gay and bisexual men with a history of multiple partners, the vaccine is expected to begin rollout through sexual health clinics in August. Adapted from the MenB meningitis vaccine, it is estimated to reduce gonorrhoea risk by 30–40%. Though not originally designed for STIs, the bacteria responsible for gonorrhoea is closely related to the meningitis B strain. England recorded over 85,000 cases in 2023—the highest since records began in 1918. The spread of antibiotic-resistant strains has heightened concerns, making prevention more vital than ever. If uptake is strong, the vaccine could prevent 100,000 cases and save the NHS £8 million over ten years. Public health leaders in Scotland and Northern Ireland are exploring similar programmes. Experts emphasise that while not a cure-all, the vaccine marks a significant step in reducing the spread of a challenging and increasingly drug-resistant infection.

Pray: for God's mercy and moral renewal as public health leaders seek to prevent harmful consequences of sexual promiscuity. (1 Corinthians 6:18-19)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cded26z16leo>

Two migrants die as record number cross Channel in one day

A record-breaking 820 migrants crossed the English Channel in small boats on 21 May, the highest daily total so far this year. Tragically, two died during the journey, bringing this year's Channel death toll to 12. A French naval vessel recovered their bodies and assisted others in distress. The rising number of crossings (now exceeding 13,500, a 30% increase from last year) underscores the continued urgency of the crisis. Despite a fall in overall net migration to an estimated 616,000 in 2024, the Government faces mounting pressure over its handling of illegal crossings. Nearly 30,000 have been deported since Labour took office, including foreign criminals and failed asylum seekers, but only a small proportion of them arrived in small boats. Critics, including the Refugee Council, warn that enforcement alone is failing, with smuggling networks profiting from human desperation. Meanwhile, politicians debate the future of immigration, enforcement, and public perception amid a deeply divided national conversation.

Pray: for mercy and protection over the desperate, and for leaders to act with both justice and compassion. (Psalm 82:4)

More: <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/two-die-cross-channel-busiest-day-5s6b8wmnx>

Europe

Armenia looks to other countries rather than Russia for weapons

Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov has acknowledged delays in weapons deliveries to Armenia due to the strain of the war in Ukraine. Armenia, a long-time Russian ally, has historically depended on Russian arms amid its bitter decades-long conflict with Azerbaijan. However, as Moscow struggles to meet military commitments, Armenia is increasingly turning to Western partners like France and India for defense support. Lavrov said that these shifts were worrying, especially given France's strong opposition to Russia's actions in Ukraine. But Armenia has expressed deepening frustration with Moscow, particularly after Russian peacekeepers failed to prevent the mass exodus of over 100,000 ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh during Azerbaijan's swift military campaign in September 2023. As Armenia rethinks its security alliances, the region remains volatile, with historical wounds and unresolved tensions continuing to shape its strategic decisions.

Pray: for lasting peace, clarity, and protection in Armenia, and for wisdom for all the leaders involved. (Psalm 46:9a)

More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/21/russia-blames-ukraine-war-europe-for-delaying-arms-supply-to-ally-armenia>

Romania: pro-European wins presidential election

Nicusor Dan, the liberal and pro-European mayor of Bucharest, has defeated far-right nationalist George Simion in Romania's presidential run-off, securing 54% of the vote. His victory followed months of political upheaval, including a contested earlier election annulled over alleged Russian interference. Despite Simion's strong support from Romanians abroad and his alignment with banned candidate Calin Georgescu, Dan prevailed with broad domestic backing. Supporters praised his anti-corruption platform, EU alignment, and commitment to Ukraine. Jubilant crowds celebrated in Bucharest after results confirmed his win. Many voters viewed him as a stabilising force in contrast to Simion's nationalist, anti-EU rhetoric. International leaders, including those from Moldova and Ukraine, welcomed Dan's win as a reaffirmation of Romania's European path. Nonetheless, Simion's strong showing reveals significant dissatisfaction, especially among Romanians abroad, signalling ongoing political tensions that Dan must now work to heal.

Pray: for the new Romanian president as he takes office, especially that he will know how to heal the tensions which the election has highlighted. (Psalm 106:3)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crk2xxzxkzxo>

Worldwide

Gaza: UK and other countries put pressure on Israel

The UK has suspended trade talks with Israel, summoned its ambassador, and imposed sanctions on West Bank settlers in response to Israel's escalating military operations in Gaza, which foreign secretary David Lammy called 'morally unjustifiable'. The UK has joined France and Canada in demanding an end to military expansion and a rapid influx of humanitarian aid, as Gaza faces famine due to an eleven-week blockade. Although Israel has permitted limited aid, the UN says the assistance is vastly insufficient. Lammy condemned inflammatory remarks from Israeli officials suggesting plans to 'cleanse Gaza' and warned that Israel risks isolating itself internationally. Meanwhile, at least 82 people including a week-old baby were killed in Israeli airstrikes on 20 May: see <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-war-live-updates-aid-food-strikes-netanyahu-b2755329.html>

Pray: for justice, compassion, and a swift end to suffering in the Holy Land. (Isaiah 1:17)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy4kkl555w8o>

Panama: locals threatened by new dam proposal

Hundreds of residents in Panama's Indio River region are opposing a proposed dam project that threatens to flood their homes. The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) plans to build a 4,600-hectare reservoir to supply water to the drought-affected canal, a key passage for 6% of global maritime trade. The \$1.6 billion project, slated for completion by 2032, aims to stabilise water levels amid declining rainfall. While ACP pledges \$400 million for compensating and relocating roughly 2,500 residents, groups warn that up to 12,000 people may be affected. Many villagers, dependent on farming and fishing, feel their livelihoods are being sacrificed for international shipping interests. Recent protests on the river reflect deep opposition, despite ACP's commitment to dialogue. President Jose Raul Mulino supports the initiative, which has also stirred geopolitical tensions.

Pray: for the government to consider carefully the protests from local communities. If the project goes ahead, pray for displaced families to receive justice, provision, and lasting protection. (Psalm 82:3)

More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2025/5/21/local-communities-vow-to-fight-new-panama-canal-reservoir>

Indonesia: civic groups condemn proposal to call Soeharto a national hero

A controversial proposal to name former Indonesian president Soeharto a national hero has sparked widespread international condemnation. Over thirty civic groups issued a joint statement warning that such an honour would whitewash Soeharto's 32-year authoritarian rule, marked by systemic corruption and grave human rights abuses. The groups cited atrocities during the 1965–66 anti-communist purges, in which up to three million were killed, and the 1997–98 disappearances of pro-democracy activists, as well as Soeharto's alleged embezzlement of \$35 billion. They also referenced a 2016 tribunal in The Hague, which concluded that the Indonesian military played a central role in mass killings under his command. The nomination, currently under review, was reportedly put out by Central Java's governor, who later denied involvement. The civic leaders have urged the government to reject the nomination and instead address unresolved human rights violations and entrenched corruption linked to Soeharto - who is the father-in-law of current president Prabowo Subianto. This is not the first proposal to nominate him as a national hero; similar attempts took place in 2010 and 2015.

Pray: for justice, integrity, and truth in remembering national history and leaders. (Isaiah 5:20)

More: <https://asianews.network/international-outcry-grows-over-late-indonesian-president-soeharto-national-hero-proposal/>

Malaysia: commitment to fight against invasive fish species

In Malaysia, invasive fish species like the suckermouth catfish are threatening the nation's rivers and native aquatic life. Originally introduced for aquariums, the hardy suckermouth has proliferated in polluted rivers, outcompeting local species, spreading disease, and causing environmental damage such as riverbank erosion. The Klang Valley, along with many other waterways, is now overrun by these aggressive invaders. Alarmed, Mohamad Haziq founded a volunteer group during the Covid lockdowns to combat the ecological threat. Dubbed Malaysia's 'foreign fish hunter squad', the group now boasts over 1,000 members and meets weekly to catch and remove invasive fish. While suckermouths are largely considered undesirable, their eggs are used for bait, and researchers are exploring potential uses for the fish - including biochar, leather, fertiliser, and pharmaceutical collagen. Despite acknowledging the fight may never be fully won, the group remains committed to raising awareness and protecting Malaysia's fragile river ecosystems, one net at a time.

Pray: giving thanks for the commitment shown by Haziq's group. Pray for protection of creation, and for wisdom to know how to deal with invasive species in many different countries. (Ezekiel 47:10)

More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/17/malysias-fish-hunters-target-invasive-species-one-catch-at-a-time>

USA: Biden diagnosed with 'aggressive' prostate cancer

Joe Biden, 82, has been diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer that has spread to his bones. The diagnosis followed recent urinary symptoms and revealed a high-grade, aggressive form of the disease. However, the cancer is hormone-sensitive, meaning it may respond well to treatment. Biden and his family are currently considering treatment options. The news has drawn sympathy from across the political spectrum. Donald Trump expressed support for Biden and his family, wishing him a swift recovery. Other political figures voiced their prayers and confidence in Biden's resilience. Biden, who stepped down from the 2024 presidential race due to health concerns, has maintained a low public profile since leaving office, though he has given occasional speeches and interviews. A long-time advocate for cancer research, he relaunched the Cancer Moonshot initiative in 2022. His son Beau died of brain cancer in 2015.

Pray: for strength, peace, and clarity for Joe Biden and his family. (Psalm 147:3)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwywqg7lq1zo>

USA: two Israeli embassy staff killed in Washington DC

Two Israeli embassy staff members, Sarah Lynn Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, were shot dead outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington DC. The couple, described as being 'in the prime of their lives', were leaving an event when they were attacked. A suspect, Elias Rodriguez, 30, was apprehended at the scene and reportedly shouted 'free Palestine' while being detained. Authorities are investigating potential links to terrorism and antisemitism. The killings have shocked both US and Israeli communities, and are being condemned as a brutal act of antisemitic violence. Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to increase security at diplomatic missions worldwide, while the foreign minister called the attack 'a direct result of toxic, antisemitic incitement'. The incident comes amid intensifying scrutiny of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, which has triggered widespread global criticism and deepening humanitarian concern.

Pray: for comfort for grieving families, and for protection over Jewish communities facing rising hatred and violence. (Jeremiah 1:8)

More: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/cy9vr10n732t>

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