

Prayer Alert

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His truth for ever stands secure; He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor; and none shall find His promises vain. (Isaac Watts)

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

National elections: please pray for parliamentary and general elections taking place in Portugal (18 January) and Myanmar (25th).

Open Doors 2026 Watchlist

You may be interested to browse and pray over the 'World Watch List' - Open Doors' annual ranking of the fifty countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. [See here](#)



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!

Would you like to join our Prayer Alert team?

We are a group of volunteers based in different parts of England, India, and USA. 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

Complex molecules could not form alone, scientist says

Former research scientist Fazale 'Fuz' Rana shares how advanced scientific study led him from agnosticism to Christian faith. As an undergraduate, science pushed him toward doubt, but deeper research in biochemistry revealed to him the extraordinary complexity, elegance, and precision of even the simplest living cells. Through decades of laboratory experiments, he says, scientists have consistently failed to demonstrate how life's essential complex molecules could arise spontaneously through unguided chemical processes. Instead, these experiments require careful planning, intervention, and controlled environments provided by intelligent researchers. Rana describes this contradiction as the 'problem of unwarranted researcher intervention', highlighting the irony that attempts to prove chemical evolution instead point toward intelligent design. This scientific dilemma raised deeper questions about purpose and origin, ultimately leading him to Scripture. He describes a profound encounter with Jesus through the Sermon on the Mount, recognising his sin and need for salvation through Christ's sacrifice. Now serving as president and CEO of Reasons to Believe, he seeks to engage sceptics by presenting a robust scientific case for God's existence and the reliability of the Bible.

Praise: God for revealing His intelligent design through science, drawing sceptics toward truth and saving faith. (Psalm 19:1)
More: www.godreports.com/2026/01/complex-molecules-needed-for-simplest-cell-could-not-form-alone-scientist-says/

How did Gen Z become the most religious generation alive?

New research suggests Generation Z is emerging as the most religious generation alive, with belief in a higher power now surpassing even those aged over 65. A YouGov study shows church attendance among 18- to 25-year-olds has risen sharply, from 7% in 2018 to 23% in 2024, while belief in a higher power has grown from 28% to 49%. Social media is playing a key role in this shift, with many young people encountering Christian ideas for the first time through short videos on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Influencers and young evangelists are openly sharing testimonies, baptisms, and Gospel messages, creating curiosity and drawing peers into church communities. Researchers note that Gen Z has faced significant challenges, including the pandemic and cost-of-living pressures, leaving many searching for meaning, stability, and hope. While not all young people observe or embrace this trend, evidence points to a growing openness to faith, community, and spiritual truth. Gen Z

appears to be reshaping how belief is expressed in a digital age.

Praise: God for awakening Gen Z hearts, using digital spaces to draw many toward faith, community, and truth. (Isaiah 44:3)
More: news.sky.com/story/how-did-gen-z-become-the-most-religious-generation-alive-13492027

British Isles

Chinese super embassy in London 'could spy on the whole of Europe'

Concerns are growing in the UK over plans for a vast new Chinese embassy in London, amid warnings it could become a major hub for espionage across Europe. Unredacted planning documents reveal a concealed underground chamber positioned close to fibre-optic cables carrying sensitive financial and internet data for the City of London and Canary Wharf. Security experts say the scale of the underground facilities raises serious questions about potential intelligence-gathering activities. The proposed embassy, near the Tower of London, would be China's largest diplomatic outpost in Europe. MPs, former intelligence officials, and international partners have urged the Government to block the development, citing China's designation as a hostile state in multiple security briefings. Despite assurances that national security concerns have been assessed, critics argue the risks remain unacceptable. The debate highlights the need to safeguard critical infrastructure, sovereignty, and democratic freedoms in an increasingly contested global environment.

Pray: thanking God for exposing hidden threats; pray that Britain will guard truth, freedom, and security with courage. (Psalm 121:7)
More: www.standard.co.uk/news/london/china-plans-secret-room-london-super-embassy-redacted-documents-b1266164.html

'Critical incidents' at NHS hospitals as winter viruses surge

Six NHS hospital trusts across England have declared critical incidents as winter pressures intensify, driven by rising flu cases, norovirus, Covid, staff sickness, and delayed discharges. Nottingham University Hospitals and Sherwood Forest Hospitals and four others are now on that status, signalling that services are stretched beyond safe capacity. Emergency departments are experiencing unprecedented demand, with some seeing over five hundred patients a day. Hospitals report long corridor waits, cancelled non-urgent procedures, and extreme pressure on frontline staff. NHS leaders say festive gatherings, cold weather, and icy conditions have contributed to a 'bounce back' in winter viruses and related injuries, and flu admissions are rising again after a brief decline. Declaring a critical incident allows trusts to prioritise life-threatening cases, redeploy staff, and restrict visitors to limit infection spread. The NHS continues to urge the public to use alternatives such as NHS 111 and community pharmacies where possible, and to support timely patient discharges.

Pray: for protection, strength, and compassion for NHS staff, and healing for patients during overwhelming winter pressures. (Isaiah 40:29)
More: uk.news.yahoo.com/nhs-hospital-trusts-critical-incident-list-flu-norovirus-093007366.html

UK economy grew by 0.3% in November, beating forecasts

The UK economy recorded stronger-than-expected growth in November, expanding by 0.3% and exceeding forecasts of 0.1%. The rebound, after a contraction in October, was driven largely by renewed industrial output and growth in the services sector. A key contributor was the recovery of car production, particularly at Jaguar Land Rover, after a cyber-attack had halted manufacturing for a significant time. Services also benefited from increased activity around the November Budget, including accounting and tax consultancy. Economists welcomed the data but warned that underlying growth remains fragile and uneven, with construction output falling sharply due to adverse weather conditions. While business investment and government spending may support growth in the months ahead, analysts remain divided over whether November represents genuine momentum or merely a temporary rebound. The figures underscore the importance of stable leadership, responsible policy decisions, and long-term investment to sustain recovery amid ongoing cost-of-living pressures and global uncertainty.

Pray: for steady growth, fair policies, and economic renewal that protects workers, families, and vulnerable communities. (Deuteronomy 8:18)
More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8d041pp85mo

Jenrick sacked by Tories, defects to Reform UK

Robert Jenrick's political journey has taken another dramatic turn after his sacking from the Conservative shadow cabinet and his decision to align himself at once with Nigel Farage's Reform UK party. Long known for courting controversy, Jenrick has steadily shifted from a centrist, pro-Cameron Remainer into a leading figure on the hard right of British politics. As a minister, he was embroiled in major rows over a planning decision involving a Tory donor and over actions taken during Covid lockdowns. More recently, he built his leadership campaign almost entirely around a tough stance on immigration, including leaving the European Convention on Human Rights. His rhetoric and admiration for Donald Trump have alarmed former allies and delighted critics on the right. Once seen as a rising moderate star, Jenrick now appears determined to reshape his future beyond the Conservative mainstream, signalling further turbulence in an already fractured political landscape.

Pray: that all political leaders will act with integrity, humility, and concern for the common good. (Proverbs 29:2)
More: news.sky.com/story/robert-jenrick-from-centrist-cameron-remainer-to-anti-immigration-zealot-and-now-reform-13494679

Twenty-two councils ask for election delays

More than twenty English councils have requested permission to delay their local elections scheduled for May, affecting over 2.5 million voters. The proposed postponements are linked to the government's wide-ranging reorganisation of local government, which will replace many two-tier county and district councils with new unitary authorities. Ministers argue that holding elections for councils expected to be dissolved or restructured within a year would be costly, inefficient, and distracting from frontline services. Elections would instead be deferred until 2027. However, the move has sparked significant political controversy. Opposition parties have accused the government of undermining democratic accountability and avoiding voter scrutiny, warning that councillors could remain in office for extended periods without renewed mandates. Protests have erupted at some council meetings, highlighting public concern over transparency and trust in the democratic process. While ministers insist that national security, efficiency, and service delivery remain priorities, critics argue that postponing elections risks weakening public confidence in local government.

Pray: for integrity, transparency, and respect for democracy as leaders reform local government and serve communities faithfully. (Proverbs 29:2)
More: www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd7z892jzdeo

PM: 'X is acting' ensure full compliance with UK law'

Keir Starmer has said that Elon Musk's social media platform X is acting to ensure compliance with UK law, following outrage over its AI tool, Grok, being used to generate non-consensual sexualised images. There was widespread condemnation in parliament, with ministers describing the images, particularly of women and children, as shameful and harmful. Ofcom has launched an independent investigation, with the Government pledging full support and signalling that further legislation will be introduced if current powers prove insufficient. While X restricted some image-generation features, many feel it continues to enable abuse, accusing it of monetising exploitation. The controversy has reignited debate over free speech, corporate responsibility, and the regulation of artificial intelligence. Concerns have also been raised about the impact of automated

content on young people's mental health and the need for stronger online safeguards.

Pray: for strong protection of children, moral accountability online, and leaders who uphold justice over profit. (Psalm 82:4)

More: www.itv.com/news/2026-01-14/x-is-acting-to-ensure-full-compliance-with-uk-law-pm-tells-mps

Assisted dying debate faces delay, bishops 'risk losing legitimacy'

In an unexpected move, as the House of Lords was considering the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, a motion was introduced calling for additional time to scrutinise the proposals before the current parliamentary session ends. Supporters of the bill argue that extending debate is necessary to allow it to return to the Commons, while critics insist that thorough examination is essential to strengthen safeguards for vulnerable people. Former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, who supports the bill, has warned that bishops opposing assisted dying risk undermining their public credibility by resisting legislation backed by significant sections of society. His position contrasts sharply with that of other Church leaders who argue that legalising assisted dying would erode the sanctity of life and place pressure on the elderly, disabled, and terminally ill. The debate highlights ongoing tensions between compassion, autonomy, and the Christian conviction that life is sacred and worthy of protection at every stage.

Pray: for lawmakers and Church leaders to uphold the sanctity of life and protect the vulnerable. (Psalm 139:13)

More: premierchristian.news/en/news/article/assisted-dying-debate-faces-delay-as-lord-carey-warns-bishops-risk-losing-legitimacy

Kent / Sussex: major incident declared, water supplier under investigation for shortages

South East Water is under investigation by regulator Ofwat after repeated outages since November left tens of thousands of households and businesses across Kent and Sussex without drinking water. Some properties have endured up to six days without supply, with around 8,500 addresses still affected. The watchdog is examining whether the company breached licence conditions by failing to meet customer service standards or provide adequate support. This follows earlier prolonged outages in Tunbridge Wells, where 24,000 properties lacked drinkable water for nearly two weeks. Ofwat is also reviewing the firm's supply resilience, while the government has asked for a wider licence review. A major incident has been declared, schools have closed, and ministers are holding daily emergency meetings. South East Water has blamed storm-related power cuts and burst pipes, but frustration remains high as recovery plans continue amid slow refilling of storage tanks.

Pray: for reliable water supplies, and for the problems to be resolved and connections completely restored to all affected communities. (Isaiah 41:17)

More: news.sky.com/story/regulator-investigating-south-east-water-after-supply-cut-to-thousands-of-homes-13494107

Europe

Poland: 'only Trump can restrain Russia'

On a visit to the UK, Karol Nawrocki, Poland's president, has warned that Europe faces an increasingly dangerous security environment and believes only Donald Trump can restrain Russia's ambitions. He said that Russia could not be trusted and was actively testing both Poland's defences and Europe's unity. He pointed to large-scale drone incursions from Belarus and Ukraine as evidence of a sustained hybrid conflict, involving military pressure and disinformation. While expressing concern about tensions within the Western alliance, he argued that Donald Trump remained Europe's essential security guarantor and deserved support for efforts to end the war in Ukraine. Nawrocki praised Britain's military assistance and criticised European leaders for neglecting defence readiness. With Poland investing heavily in security, he urged greater focus on resilience, cooperation and unity in what he described as dangerous and uncertain times.

Pray: that European leaders will act wisely to guard against future threats, amid rising global insecurity. (Psalm 91:4)

More: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c041de5gn02o

Greenland: talks in Washington and Denmark, US senators seek to block Trump's plans

US senators have introduced bipartisan legislation aimed at safeguarding NATO unity amid rising tensions over Greenland. The bill would prevent US government funds from being used to seize, occupy or otherwise assert control over the territory of any NATO member state. This is a response to repeated statements by Donald Trump suggesting that Greenland, a self-governing territory of Denmark, should come under US control, even by force. Many believe that such rhetoric threatens NATO's core principle of collective defence and undermines trust among allies. European leaders, particularly in Denmark and Greenland, have firmly rejected any suggestion of US control, emphasising their commitment to NATO, Danish sovereignty and the EU. On 16 January, with the territory's strategic location and natural resources drawing global attention, Marco Rubio is due to meet the foreign ministers of Denmark and Greenland in Washington, and a bipartisan group of US lawmakers will be in Denmark for talks. Breaking news: some European troops have gone to Greenland after inconclusive talks with the USA. [See https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/european-military-heads-greenland-trumps-ambitions-island-undeterred-by-talks-2026-01-15/](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/european-military-heads-greenland-trumps-ambitions-island-undeterred-by-talks-2026-01-15/)

Pray: that restraint, diplomacy, and respect for sovereignty guide leaders within fragile alliances. (Romans 12:18)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/14/us-senators-introduce-bill-to-stop-trump-seizing-greenland

Worldwide

Global: last eleven years have been the warmest ever recorded

New data from European and American scientists shows the planet endured its third-warmest year on record in 2025, with little expectation of cooling ahead. According to them, global temperatures averaged 1.47°C above pre-industrial levels, meaning the past eleven years are now the warmest ever recorded. For the first time, the three-year average from 2023 to 2025 exceeded the 1.5°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement, raising serious doubts about the world's ability to meet its climate goals (especially since the USA, one of the main emitters of greenhouse gases, withdrew from the agreement a year ago). The UK Met Office confirmed similar findings, pointing to rising greenhouse gas concentrations as the main driver. While some countries have announced emissions targets, scientists warn these remain insufficient. In October, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres stressed the need for early warning systems to protect communities across the globe.

Pray: that nations will act more decisively to take the actions needed to protect creation and vulnerable communities. (Genesis 2:15)

More: www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/14/scientists-confirm-2025-as-third-warmest-year-ever-recorded

Iran: Trump steps back from threats of military action over protests

Donald Trump has stepped back, at least temporarily, from threats of US military action against Iran, saying he has been assured that the killing of protesters has stopped and that no executions are planned. He said these assurances came from 'very important sources on the other side', though the claims have not been independently verified. Despite reports that over 3,400 have been killed during the recent anti-government

protests and fears of imminent executions, Trump said he was unconvinced that military action would bring decisive change. He had been strenuously lobbied by leaders in the Middle East to not to go ahead with strikes which would be certain to lead to an Iranian counterstrike on US bases. Iranian officials have publicly denied plans for executions, and at least one expected execution has been postponed. While rhetoric has softened slightly, deep divisions over human rights abuses and Iran's nuclear ambitions persist, leaving the situation fragile and unresolved.

Pray: that the war of words will not escalate into military action. Pray that justice and restraint will prevail inside Iran, and that the authorities will take note of what the protestors are demanding. (Micah 6:8)

More: www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/15/iran-protest-killings-trump-tehran-claims-no-executions

Syria: government tells Kurdish forces to leave Aleppo after deadly clashes

Syria's army has moved reinforcements to areas east of Aleppo after ordering Kurdish forces to withdraw, following deadly clashes which have killed over 100 and displaced as many as 150,000. The Islamist-led government is seeking to reassert control nationwide, but efforts to integrate the Kurds' autonomous administration and forces into the state have stalled, despite an agreement reached earlier this year. Kurdish-led forces deny building up troops and accuse the government of launching fresh attacks, while Damascus insists it is responding to provocation. Limited skirmishes and artillery fire have been reported, raising fears of a wider confrontation. In Qamishli, the main Kurdish city in the country's northeast, thousands of people demonstrated, accusing the government of breaking its promises and preparing a broader assault. With mistrust deepening, the situation remains volatile, threatening further suffering for civilians already exhausted by years of conflict. Christians in the region are asking for prayer: see <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/syria-aleppo-conflict/>

Pray: that dialogue will replace violence, and that civilians displaced by the renewed conflict will soon be able to return home. (Isaiah 2:4)

More: www.france24.com/en/live-news/20260113-syrian-army-tells-kurdish-forces-to-withdraw-from-area-east-of-aleppo

Uganda: troops in Kampala and internet services banned before election

On 15 January Uganda headed into a tense election as Yoweri Museveni sought a seventh term as president after nearly four decades in power. The final days of campaigning have been marked by heavy military deployments in the capital, Kampala, and a government-ordered suspension of mobile internet services, measures which opposition figures say signal growing authoritarianism. Museveni's main challenger, Bobi Wine, has drawn strong support from younger, urban voters frustrated by unemployment, corruption and limited political change. Security forces say their presence is intended to prevent violence, but rights groups are concerned about intimidation and force used against opposition supporters. While Museveni retains strong backing in rural regions and is expected to win, critics fear the process will lack credibility. The aging president's authority has become increasingly dependent on the military led by his controversial son, Muhoozi Kainerugaba. The election highlights deep divisions in Uganda, as many citizens long for peaceful transition, accountable leadership and hope for a more inclusive future.

Pray: that Uganda's election will bring justice, peace, and the best possible outcome for its people. (Micah 6:8)

More: www.africanews.com/2026/01/13/military-deployed-to-kampala-as-uganda-gets-ready-for-general-election/

Japan: search for alternative rare earth sources to avoid reliance on China

Japan has launched a bold effort to secure its future supply of critical minerals by sending a research vessel to mine rare earth elements from the deep seabed near Minamitori Island. The month-long mission marks the first attempt anywhere in the world to lift mineral-rich mud from six kilometres below the ocean surface. This project reflects Japan's growing urgency to reduce reliance on China, which currently dominates global rare earth supply and has recently banned exports of items destined for Japan's military. Rare earths are essential for cars, electronics, renewable energy technologies and defence equipment, making supply disruptions a serious economic and security concern. Since a similar crisis in 2010, Japan has diversified imports, invested overseas and built stockpiles, yet still remains heavily dependent on China. Domestic seabed mining could provide a long-term solution, though it is costly, technically complex and years away from full production.

Pray: that the leaders of the two countries act wisely to secure resources while pursuing peace and cooperation. (Proverbs 21:1)

More: japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/news-services/reuters/20260112-303533/

Thailand: at least 31 dead after crane collapses on train

A devastating rail disaster in northeast Thailand has left at least 31 people dead after a construction crane collapsed onto a speeding passenger train, causing it to derail and burst into flames. The accident occurred as the train was travelling from Bangkok to Ubon Ratchathani, carrying nearly 200 passengers. More than sixty were injured, several critically, as fire engulfed damaged carriages. The crane was part of a Thai-Chinese high-speed rail project, part of an ambitious plan to connect China with south-east Asia. The company concerned was involved in the construction of a Bangkok building which collapsed in March during an earthquake. Witnesses described scenes of chaos, with carriages torn open and rescue workers scrambling to reach trapped passengers. Authorities have ordered a full investigation, while political leaders have vowed accountability. The tragedy has shocked the nation and renewed public scrutiny of large infrastructure projects and the human cost when safety is compromised.

Pray: for comfort, healing, and justice for victims, families, and traumatised communities. (Psalm 147:3)

More: www.independent.co.uk/asia/southeast-asia/thailand-train-crane-collapse-accident-deaths-live-updates-b2900081.html

DRC: deadly landslide kills at least 22

A deadly landslide has struck eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, killing at least 22 people and leaving dozens missing in a remote village in North Kivu. Triggered by hours of intense rainfall, the hillside collapsed in the early hours of the morning while residents were asleep, sweeping homes away and cutting the main road linking Goma with Walikale. The blocked route has severely hampered rescue efforts and delayed government assistance. Eastern Congo has endured decades of violence involving government forces and armed groups, including the Rwanda-backed M23. The disaster highlights the vulnerability of communities living in areas where the state's presence is weak and insecurity is high. In a region already scarred by conflict, displacement and poverty, seasonal rains continue to claim lives, deepening the humanitarian crisis faced by countless families. See also https://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Landslide_in_east_DR_Congo_kills_18_999.html

Pray: for comfort, rescue, and lasting peace for communities facing disaster and conflict. (Isaiah 41:10)

More: www.africanews.com/2026/01/13/landslide-in-eastern-congo-kills-at-least-13-leaves-over-30-missing/

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