

The World Watch List 2025 is now available. Here are the key headlines

More than 380 million Christians worldwide face persecution and discrimination for their faith

North Korea again number one

Since the first World Watch List in 1983, North Korea has been number one 23 times – that's almost 70% of the time. The persecution of our North Korean family has worsened in the last year



following a rise in reported incidents of violence. It coincides with stricter regulations announced by the North Korean authorities in early 2024.

4,476 Christians killed worldwide

Last year, 4,476 believers worldwide were killed for their faith. Most were from Nigeria, with 3,100, which is fewer than 2023. However, other countries in sub-Saharan Africa have seen rising numbers of Christian deaths, including Burkina Faso, where 201 believers lost their lives – that's more than a fivefold increase on 2023.

Rising violence, from Burkina Faso to Kazakhstan

The most violent region is sub-Saharan Africa, where weak government and political tensions allow Islamic extremism to flourish. Persecution is rising in countries such as Burkina Faso (20) and Mali (14), as well as Chad (49), which enters the top 50 for the first time. Violence grows in situations of anarchy and internal conflict. Trapped in the chaos of civil war, Christians in Yemen (3), Sudan (5) and Myanmar (13) are easy targets.

But strong, authoritarian regimes are also places of officially sanctioned violence. In both Kyrgyzstan (47) – back in the top 50 for the first time since 2013 – and Kazakhstan (up nine places to 38), churches and believers have been attacked by police and security services, or through locally orchestrated mobs.

Displaced church

The persecuted church is, increasingly, a displaced church, exiled to refugee or IDP (internally displaced people) camps. Sudan (5) is facing the largest displacement crisis in the world: in a country of 49 million people, the number of IDPs by mid-2024 had surpassed 7.7 million.

Christians forced into the shadows

More and more Christians are having to worship undercover. In Afghanistan (10), it is effectively impossible to publicly express your faith. In Algeria (19), all Protestant churches have been forced to close and the number of Christians awaiting trial and sentencing is at an all-time high. In China (15), the era of relative tolerance is over. Unregistered churches are now illegal. Meanwhile, in Libya (4), the small Christian community is extremely careful to avoid a repeat of the March 2023 crackdown that swept up numerous Christians for arrest.

Source: www.opendoorsuk.org

Ringstone in Aveland News Sheet



19 January 2025

The Second Sunday of Epiphany

We welcome Revd Sylvia Rice-Oxley, and thank her for leading our Eucharist service

Collect for this Sunday

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Psalm 36.5-10 : Human Wickedness and Divine Goodness

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

**Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgements are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.**

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

**They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.**

For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

**O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your salvation to the upright of heart!**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and for evermore,
Amen**

Readings for this Sunday

Isaiah 62.1-5

1 Corinthians

12.1-11

John 2.1-11



Post Communion Prayer for this Sunday

God of glory, you nourish us with your Word who is the bread of life: fill us with your Holy Spirit that through us the light of your glory may shine in all the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Please pray for...

Eben Atkinson, Sheila Bates, Margaret Brumby, Marie Rose Cubacub, Christine Evans, Sue Grainge, Annie Hall, Clive Hall, Robert Hitchens, Jane Knight, Judy Long, Imogen Matthews, Pat Reid, John Rowntree, Maggie Sharman, Ivan Spencer, Amanda Thomson, Clive Walker, Judy Watson, Kevin Whitfield, King Charles III, and for any others whom we name in the silence of our hearts.

We give thanks for those on the road to recovery.

We remember Astrid Kuhn, Carol Godfrey, Jo Honniball and the souls of all the faithful departed. May they rest in peace and rise in glory; and we pray for those who mourn their loss.

We pray for Nick Walker and Catherine Holden, who are getting married at Morton on 18 January

Funeral anniversaries: Shirley Dawson, Peter Chubbuck (1 year); Evelyn Bates, Margaret King, Arthur Branch, Caroline Creasey, Patricia Gray (2 years)

Other services in the Group

Saturday 18 January	2.30pm	Wedding of Catherine Holden and Nicholas Walker	Morton
Tuesday 21 January	11am	Funeral of Peter Ashton	Morton



Can you help?

Here is a list of items that are running low, but feel free to donate any in-date, non-perishable food at any of our

Donation Points

Milk (UHT cartons)	Fruit juice / squash	Coffee
Tinned meat	Jam	Deserts
Custard	Snacks—pot noodles, rice etc	
Laundry powder / liquid	Washing up liquid	Toothbrushes
Toilet roll	Razors and shaving foam	

There is a collection box in St John the Baptist Church, on the left at the back of the church. Please be as generous as possible.

Sunday and regular weekday Services in the Group

19 January	11am	Eucharist	Morton
26 January	11am	Eucharist	Kirkby Underwood
	3pm	Evening Prayer	Morton
2 February	11am	Eucharist	Morton
	3pm	Evening Prayer	Kirkby Underwood
9 February	9am	Eucharist	Haconby
	3pm	Evening Prayer	Morton
Wednesday	10 am	See below	Morton

From 1 January, the Wednesday service will be Morning Prayer.

Do you know anyone who is unable to get to church but who would like to receive Holy Communion? Please speak with your church warden, or email ringstoneoffice@gmail.com

Safeguarding & Contact Information

Safeguarding: We take your welfare and safety very seriously!

Revd Neil (Rector): revdneil@yahoo.com, 01778 219626 or

Janice Hill (Group Safeguarding Officer): janicethreetun s@hotmail.co.uk, 01778 440733 and 07972 211936

Group Administrator and for entries to news sheet (by Tuesday please)

Sue O'Riordan: ringstoneoffice@gmail.com

From today's I Corinthians reading

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

Reflection:

We need a variety of gifts in the Church. How boring it would be if we all had the same gift or gifts. And how deprived we would be! Paul is reminding us of our God who sees our needs and addresses them through the gifts of the different members of the Christian community.

So, we ask ourselves:

- ✠ What gift has God given me?
- ✠ How do I use that gift to serve others?
- ✠ How am I a sign of God's active presence in the world?