



monthly information and resource update

March 2017

Dear Friends

Welcome to this month's Update full of news and resources for your church.

Today marks the beginning of Lent, and you will find links to some new Lent resources for 2017 listed below. Included are [reflections from Regional Minister Phil Jump](#), a Lent course from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and the 40acts challenge from Stewardship.

Last week saw the launch of the [latest resource from the Joint Public Issues Team](#) - ***A place to call home***. This six-part bible study is designed to help small discussion groups explore issues around housing.

Since our last Update, [booking has opened for our Baptist Assembly](#) in Harrogate on 13 May. The Assembly website has all the information you need about this year's event. Please share this widely with your church and encourage people to book their place - and let them know about the [special offer](#) for people travelling to Harrogate using Virgin trains.

Stephen Keyworth
Faith and Society Team



The March Prayer Diary is now available

Please print out a copy for those unable to access it



Read about Emmanuel Baptist Church, Netherton in the North Western Baptist Association



Baptist Union Council will be meeting at Swanwick from 16-17 March. Please keep Council members in your prayers.



Presidency Elections

Profiles of those who have been nominated to serve as President of the Baptist Union 2018-19, and an explanation of the election process, have been sent to every church and minister - by email where possible, with paper copies sent to those without an active email address. We would like as many as possible to be involved with the process of discernment, so please share the profiles with your Church Meeting. **Voting this year will primarily be online and is open until 31 March.**



Taxation Alerts

Treasurers and Ministers are asked to note that two tax alerts were posted on the website Treasurers' area on 8 and 21 February. Please [click here to access the Treasurers' area](#).



How to reduce your church insurance premium

Some churches find it difficult to afford their Baptist Insurance premiums. One way of making savings can be to choose to include an excess in your policy. This means you may pay more if there is a claim but you could save substantial amounts on your premium. To discuss your options please call Baptist Insurance on 0345 070 2223.



Staying connected as Baptists Together

As part of Baptists Together, there are a number of ways to keep in touch. 'Who are We - Staying Connected' is a new resource designed to be shared in church. It aims to help enable those that know very little about Baptists Together to find out more and connect to the wider family. Please print and share on your notice board.



Visual Reflections

We regularly post visual reflections on our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts. These high quality images can be used for personal reflection and in churches, with our blessing. Click here to [find the current selection of images on our Flickr account](#).

This month's featured events:



Romero Week 2017 - 18-25 March

2017 is the centenary year of Oscar Romero's birth and the 37th since his martyrdom, which will be marked by several events around the country with Martha Zechmeister speaking on *The Secret of Romero – Passion for God and Compassion for the Poor*. There will also be a National Ecumenical Service in St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, London, at 11:00 on Saturday 25 March. [Please click here for details](#).



Exploring Missional Communities - Saturday 25 March

Chichester Baptist Church is on a journey of exploring using Sundays not just for worship gatherings but also for mission. Four years and nine Missional Communities later they've learned a lot along the way. Come and hear their story, not to copy the blueprint but to think about how your church can engage more meaningfully with your local community. Ideal for leaders, their teams and those with a heart to see local church engage more meaningfully. Cost: £10 (lunch included). [Click here to book your place\(s\)](#).



Signs Of Hope: An Eco weekend - 7-9 April

As we face possible environmental and ecological disaster we need to find reasons for hope, and spiritual resources for an earth-honouring life. This weekend at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire will be led by the Revd Kevin Durrant, Baptist minister and author of *The Earth Will Teach You*, and Canon Brian Davis, who chairs Eco Church Harborough. Click here for [more information about the weekend](#).



Justification and Justice Symposium - Saturday 8 April

Five hundred years ago Martin Luther spearheaded the Reformation. Many years later Martin Luther King led the Civil Rights Movement. Two very different men, living in different ages, both challenging injustice. This symposium at Spurgeon's College, London will investigate the histories of both Martins and apply them to our churches. [Click here for details and to book your place.](#)



Baptist Assembly - Saturday 13 May

[Booking is now open](#) for this year's Assembly at the **Harrogate International Centre** (HIC). Watch the [video from Benjamin Francis](#), who will be sharing something of what God is doing in South Asia at this year's Assembly, as he encourages churches to be part of the 2017 Assembly and [download the Assembly poster](#) and [Assembly programme](#) to share with your church. Through the generosity of HIC, there will also be a **communion service on Sunday morning** which will be open to all. Please encourage your church to join us. Please note that [Virgin Trains are currently offering 25% discount](#) on advance tickets for all delegates travelling to Harrogate on their services.



Crucible Course - 20-21 May

Christians across western culture are facing profound challenges and fresh opportunities - if we have the courage and imagination to grasp them. The Crucible course addresses these opportunities through six intensive weekends in Birmingham. The next topics on offer are:

- Stream 1: *Creating New Churches* - offering resources for pioneering new churches, particularly in emerging or marginalised cultures
- Stream 2: *Jesus Unplugged* - imagining how we might re-tell the story of Jesus today in ways that connect with contemporary culture

Click here for [full details about the Crucible course](#).



Thy Kingdom Come - 25 May - 4 June

Join the global wave of prayer. Baptist churches are being invited to take part in a global wave of prayer in the period between Ascension and Pentecost 2017. Thy Kingdom Come is an initiative of Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, and seeks to unite Christians in praying together for people to know Jesus Christ. [Click here to find out more and order or download resources.](#)



Further Faster UK Conference - 7-8 July

Finchampstead Baptist Church is hosting the Further Faster UK Conference in partnership with Lead Academy. It features a team from North Point Church in Atlanta (one of the largest churches in the USA) sharing their experience of creating a church that unchurched people love to be part of. North Point has had great success in reaching and discipling unchurched people. UK practitioners will also be sharing how they contextualise the North Point formula into a UK context. Click here for [more information and registration](#).

This month's featured resources:



Reflections for Lent

Lent is a season that is inspired and informed by the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness at the outset of his earthly ministry. Regional Minister Phil Jump has prepared a series of six reflections for use during Lent which will be available to download each week. Please look at the Prayer and Worship section of our website to [find the reflections](#) in the resource listings lower down the screen.



CTBI Lent course

Returning Home: Christian Faith in Encounter with Other Faiths. This 2017 Lent resource explores how Christian faith has been deepened and enriched by encounters with people of different religions. This is not a resource that necessarily emphasizes common ground or that is about dialogue but how Christian faith has burned brightly following an encounter with the religious other. Click here to [download the resource](#).



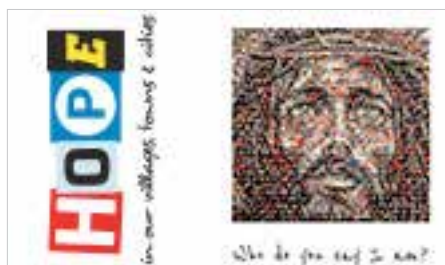
40 Acts Challenge - do Lent generously

40acts is the generosity challenge for Lent, created by UK Christian charity, Stewardship. For seven years, 40acts has asked a question: what if Lent could be about more than just giving stuff up? What if it could be a time of radical generosity as well as spiritual discipline? [Click here to find out more and sign up.](#)



One Friday

One Friday helps churches and community groups to find new ways of telling the Good Friday story outside the walls of the church. It will take many different forms - an event in the open-air, a project in a local school, an exhibition in a community venue, or a procession that retells the story in a series of locations. The One Friday website has [downloadable ideas and resources that can be adapted to any setting](#), including contemporary artwork and customisable publicity. This year the most imaginative projects will benefit from an award of £1000 and four awards of £200.



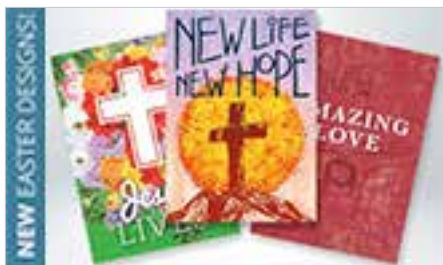
Who Do You Say I Am?

These new Easter resources from HOPE include a book, a 4-minute film and an explorers' course to use as we make Jesus known. The [Talking Jesus research](#) shows that four in ten people in the UK don't know if Jesus was a real person. Use *Who Do You Say I Am?* and make your Easter services great guest services this year, helping people to discover who Jesus is, why he died and what his resurrection means for us today. [Find out more from the HOPE website.](#)



2017 Faith Easter egg launched

The new Real Easter Egg range has been launched and churches are asked to encourage people to support this unique way of sharing the story of Easter. Have a [look at the Real Easter Egg website](#) for details of the range. There is also a competition for children to draw what happened on Easter Sunday according to the Bible. A4 entries need to be submitted by 17 March. [Click here for competition information.](#)



Resources from CPO

CPO is here to help your church reach out – from [posters](#), [banners and invites](#) to [outreach](#) and [children's resources](#) – we've got you covered. With Easter approaching, we've got loads of ideas to help you share the gospel. Don't know where to start? We've written [two books on social media and websites](#), to help your church with online communications, both for only £6! It's not just Easter resources; from 25 May – 4 June, the Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting you to join this global wave of prayer – for [Thy Kingdom Come resources](#) and more great materials [visit the CPO website](#).



A Place to Call Home?

Britain is facing a housing crisis – a claim which few people dispute. This has many symptoms that stretch across the whole of society. For some it means no home at all. *A place to call home?* is the latest resource from the Joint Public Issues Team and is a set of six bible studies for small group discussion focusing on a range of issues around housing. Click here for [more information and to download the resource](#).



Holding on to God when life hurts

Dr Elizabeth McNaught is a medical doctor, and a Christian, who nearly died from anorexia when she was fourteen. She now tells her story, with a vision to inspire and encourage others to see that, although life hurts, there is hope for everyone. *Life Hurts: a doctor's personal journey through anorexia* was published in February to tie in with Eating Disorders Awareness Week (27 Feb-5 March). [Click here for more information](#).



The Big Lunch 2017

A number of churches have engaged with the Eden Project's initiative The Big Lunch in previous years and taken part in the UK's annual get together for neighbours. This year The Big Lunch is on 18 June, but posters and invites aren't dated so you can hold your event whenever it suits your community. [Find out more, order your resource pack](#) and start planning your local event.



Financing the Kingdom...

As well as being on the leadership team of City Life Church in Portsmouth, Chris Lomas also represents HP in the UK. HP have launched a Government backed, fully-funded print initiative that is guaranteed to reduce current print costs by a minimum of 30% and energy usage by 89%, whilst getting the very latest 'pagewide' technology absolutely free. For more information please visit [free HP printers](#) or call Chris Lomas on 07713 173105.