



Update: December 2019

Dear Friends

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

During this period of Advent, we highlight three new resources to share with your church. Journey with us using our **Instagram Advent Calendar #advent: A journey from prophecy to reality**, have a look at four new **spoken word reflections** which have been filmed by The Fuelcast, and consider supporting your local care home through a '**reverse Advent calendar**' initiative from carehomefriends.org.uk

In the lead-up to our general election next week, have a look at the Advent reflections from the Baptist Times, and the resources developed by our Joint Public Issues Team - **Love, Pray Vote**.

Thank you to everyone who completed our Communications Survey last month - we are currently analysing the results and will use them to help us develop our communications with you in 2020.

May God bless you in this time of Advent, as you prepare to celebrate our Saviour's birth.

Beth, Hilary, Jane, Mary, Mat, Mike, Paul, Tracey and Wale
Faith and Society Team

This month's featured stories:



Advent, the general election, and the kingdom we long for - Andy Goodliff



Aylesham Baptist Free Church Renew 61 - Where it's OK not to be OK



Ambassadors for Christ and his kingdom - Beth Allison-Glenny

News:



Nominations for Baptist Union President 2021-22

Baptists are being invited to ***nominate the person who will serve as Baptist Union President in 2021-22***. The President will help to communicate our vision and mission priorities, bringing their own unique insights and experience into their leadership, and may feel led to bring a particular emphasis within the overall strategy. Full information was sent to all our churches in September. Click here to [find out more about how to nominate someone](#) - please be aware that the ***nomination process will close on 31 December***.



Report from Baptist Union Council

Baptist Union Council met in Derbyshire at the beginning of November. A major topic for discussion was how Baptist ministerial formation is funded. Council also explored changes to the way that we enable collaborative leadership and implementation nationally as part of our ongoing discussions about the role of the Baptist Steering Group. Click here for the [full report](#) to share with your church.



Keeping in touch with Baptists Together

As part of Baptists Together, there are a number of ways to keep in touch. [Staying Connected](#) is a resource designed to be shared in church. It aims to help enable those who know very little about Baptists Together to find out more and connect to the wider family. Please print and share on your notice board. Please also [encourage your church members to sign up](#) to receive our regular emails.



Care Home Christmas Hampers

Care home residents are some of the most overlooked and ignored people in society. Research suggests they are twice as likely to feel severely lonely as older people living in the community. This Christmas, join the campaign to help them feel valued and connected with their community by bringing some festive cheer to your local care home with a Christmas hamper for residents to share. Click here for [details of a 'Reverse Advent Calendar' initiative](#) to help.

This month's featured resources:

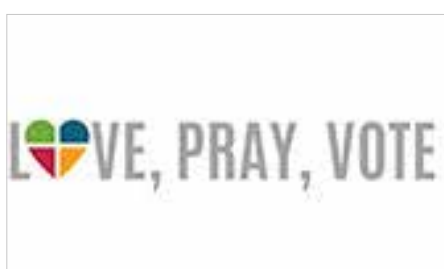


December Prayer Diary

The [December Prayer Diary](#) is now available to download from our website. The particular themes this month are:

- South Eastern Baptist Association
- General election
- Specialist Teams
- Christmas week
- Reflecting on 2019

Please print out a copy for those unable to access it.



Love, Pray, Vote

How do we respond as Christians to another election? We have written this resource in our role as part of the Joint Public Issues Team to help churches and Christians navigate the issues that come with another election. The resource includes everything from prayers, practical and legal advice for churches around elections, as well as some guides to the political debates. [Click here to download these resources](#).



Advent and Christmas Spoken Word films

Working with The Fuelcast and the South West Baptist Association we are releasing four short spoken word films through December. Designed for use in church services over the Advent and Christmas season, you can [see and download all four films now](#) from the South West Baptist Association's website.



#advent: A journey from prophecy to reality

During the days of advent, we are running a [campaign on our Instagram](#). The idea is that from 1 December to Christmas Eve, we open a door of our advent calendar, not to reveal and eat a small chocolate reindeer, but to see a piece of scripture relating to the birth and life of Jesus. Not only will his life be revealed with each passing day, but gradually a larger picture will begin to take shape. Please, come and join us [@baptiststogether](#) and journey with us from the prophecies of Jesus to the reality of Jesus and how that impacted the early Church, and our lives today.



Training Courses from the Additional Needs Alliance

'All Inclusive?' is three essential seminars for church leaders, youth and children's leaders, parents, teachers, and anyone who cares about children and young people with additional needs or disabilities.

- *Working with children and young people with special or additional needs or disabilities* - Accessibility, inclusion and belonging for all
- *Making sense of our senses* - Exploring eight of our senses and sensory additional needs and disabilities including Sensory Processing Disorder
- *Disability equality* - Understanding the Equality Act and how it applies to all children's and youth work. Click here [for details, to find a local seminar or to offer to host one](#).



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 Baptists Together events:



Crucible Course - January - April

The Crucible course is open to anyone interested in thinking afresh about discipleship, mission and church in a changing context. Between January and April the Crucible teams will be teaching two modules:

- *'On the Edge'* – mission and ministry in marginal urban and rural contexts (Manchester and Southampton).
- *'Becoming Human'* – exploring the dynamics of Jesus-centred discipleship (Exeter and London).

Click here [for more information or to book your place](#), or contact Rachel Jay: rachel@urbanexpression.org.uk



JPIT National Conference - Saturday 7 March 2020

JPIT's 2020 national conference in Derby ***Renewal and Rebellion: faith, economy and climate*** invites you to join in looking at the big challenges we all face – rethinking economic structures and taking radical steps towards climate justice, and how we can all act to change them – in faith, for people and for planet. Speakers include: Ed Miliband, MP and co-host of 'Reasons to be Cheerful' podcast, Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, and Ross Greer, Green MSP. [Click here to find out more.](#)



Inter Faith Day - Saturday 14 March 2020

Easy First Steps... in meeting your neighbours of other faiths is open to anyone who is interested in discovering what we hold in common with our neighbours from across the faiths. Organised in partnership with the URC, it will be taking place in West Yorkshire on 14 March 2020.

[For more information](#), see our website and email Carole to book your place on carole.sired@urc.org.uk



Baptist Assembly - 8-10 May 2020

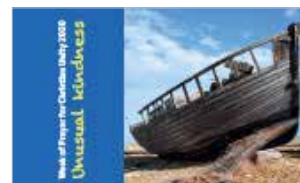
We are looking forward to Baptist Assembly being in Bournemouth next year. As it is now a Bank Holiday weekend, we will be gathering on the Friday evening for an opening celebration and finishing around lunchtime on Sunday. We really hope you will be able to join us. We encourage you to book your accommodation early - we have been able to negotiate some **special rates at selected hotels** in close proximity to the venue through **Reservation Highway**. [More details of the event](#) will be posted on the Assembly website as soon as they are available.

Other featured events:

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - 18-25 January

Next year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity needs some forward planning!

The service resources which have been prepared are well suited to involve schools/children. To take the best advantage of this mission and evangelisation opportunity, please do **start now** to contact your local schools or drama group and ask them to help you make the service as vibrant as possible. See the [resources available from the CTBI website](#) - in particular the ideas on page 12.



Disability Inclusion in our Churches - various dates Feb and March

Many churches struggle with the right language, welcome and inclusion for people living with disability so Christian charity, Through the Roof, is organising one-day workshops to help. These events will offer new ideas and resources, and share powerful stories of how God is being glorified through disabled people...stories the whole church needs to hear. [Click here for more information.](#)



Christian Resources Exhibition - 4-5 March

CRE returns to Stoneleigh Park this Spring for a two-day exhibition, which is your one-stop shop for church supplies, resources and ideas. [CRE are offering Baptists Together free tickets by using this link to book.](#)



Faith in the Second Half - 4-7 May

Whether you are firmly in later life, have retired recently, or are reflecting on life now your children have left home, this conference (from Keswick Ministries, partnering with Faith in Later Life) in the beautiful Lake District aims to provide teaching and insight into a variety of aspects of later life. From thinking about your own purpose, to how to engage older people in your community, or care for someone with dementia, there will be lots to take away. [Click here for details.](#)



The Green Project - touring to churches, schools and festivals

Here's a new dance theatre presentation for your church to consider: Springs Dance Company's Green Project aims to stir up hope and inspire action on climate change. It can be accompanied by an introductory talk, discussions and workshops. [Click here to find out more or to book this show.](#)

