



Update: February 2020

Dear Friends

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

This week we welcomed **Diane Watts** to the Faith and Society Team as our Interim Team Leader.

Diane is a Baptist minister who, for the last three years, has been working across Sussex helping establish a new charity called Together in Sussex. The focus of her work was to encourage and support local church communities to work together and bring something of God's love to the most vulnerable and marginalised. She worked with local churches to help them reflect on the needs of their communities and how God might be leading. She also established particular work streams, which included modern slavery, homelessness, mental health, loneliness and isolation, debt and food poverty. This provided the opportunity to build close connections with groups such as Renew Wellbeing and Together Free. Prior to this Diane was in local Baptist ministry in Croydon as Team Leader at Selsdon Baptist Church. She says, 'I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with the Faith and Society team to enable, support and equip the Baptist family whenever possible in their daily mission.'



Please be praying for Diane as she settles in to this new role, and for the new Team as we get to know one another and seek God's vision for our work together.

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

This month's featured stories:



Streatham: twisted religion cannot destroy loving faith in community



Hawkinge Baptist Church - developing relationships with the community



Three congregations, one family - gathering for worship at Warley Baptist

News:



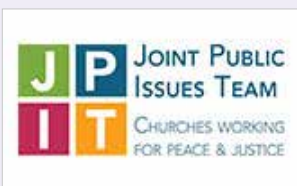
Baptist Union Presidency Election

Having received two nominations for the President 2021-22, we are now engaging in an election process to discern our next President after Yinka Oyekan. **Information about the candidates**, and details of how to participate and vote have been sent to all ministers and church secretaries (by email or post). Voting this year will primarily be online and will be **open until 31 March**. Please also **see the article** about how we might go about discerning which candidate to vote for.



Baptist Assembly

Registration for this year's Baptist Assembly in Bournemouth is now open - with special offers for group bookings available until the end of February. Full **information about our Assembly** is available on the Assembly website - including details of our guest speaker Shane Claiborne. Book your place(s) by 24 April.



Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)

Internships

Do you, or someone in your church, want to work as part of a team bringing about meaningful change in the world? Are you interested in making links between faith, policy and politics? Beginning in September 2020, this one-year paid internship offers opportunities to develop skills in research, campaigning and communication, which will enable you to work on a range of issues as part of a dynamic team. Applications are now open and you can **find the information on the JPIT website**. Applications close on 22 March.

Instagram Takeover

JPIT are having an **'instagram takeover'** on our instagram page from Sunday 9 February for two weeks.



Creation care questionnaire

There is increasing public interest around environmental issues like climate change and what the church's response should be. Hannah Gray, a leader at Light of Life Baptist Church in Norfolk, has been studying the Christian Rural and Environmental Studies course (www.cres.org.uk). As part of the research she is collecting perspectives on creation care from Baptist Churches in the UK. Please take 5 minutes to **fill in this Online questionnaire form** to add your perspective.



Student research project

As part of her degree, Oxford Brookes student Jasmine Stow is doing a research project to understand the relationship between personality traits and attitudes towards religious belief. The questionnaire will take around 20 minutes and has been approved by the Oxford Brookes Psychology Research Ethics Committee. Click **here to take part in the questionnaire**.

This month's featured resources:



February Prayer Diary

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

- Central Baptist Association
- Day of Prayer for BMS World Mission
- Student Sunday
- Church Action on Poverty Sunday

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



Modern Slavery Safeguarding Guide

Explore Together Free's *Guide to Modern Slavery and Safeguarding*. With case studies and resources this safeguarding guide is for community and faith groups to give an increased understanding of the issues surrounding Modern Slavery and a greater confidence in how to respond appropriately. [Download a copy](#) from the Together Free website.



Faith in Politics Podcast

The latest episode is 'Relief or Return: The role of international Development' and includes an interview with Sir Desmond Swayne, the ex-Minister for International Development. The interview covers his personal faith, how that shapes his work in Westminster, his experience on the Ecclesiastical committee and a discussion on the relationship of aid and foreign policy. [Click here to listen to the podcast](#).



Christianity website

[The Christianity.org.uk website](#) has been refreshed and is about to have its official launch on 11 February. Have a look and consider putting it on your church webpage or passing it on to anyone who wants to know more about the Christian faith.



Meet your MP

With a new year we welcomed in a new parliament, including a number of new MPs (and lots of returning ones), so this is a good time to get to know your MP better. Meet Your MP is an initiative from the Joint Public Issues Team to encourage positive links to develop between church congregations and their MPs. [Click here for details](#).



Living Lent

Living Lent is about recognising that changing our climate is not just an activity, but a lifestyle. That's why this Lent, you are invited to become part of a community who will respond to the call to climate action by making significant personal commitments to changing our lifestyles for the climate. [Click here for details and sign up to take on the challenge](#).



Lent resources from Engage Worship

If you are looking for a series to run in your church, with worship resources, sermon outlines and a personal devotions book for church members to follow, have a look at the Worship in the Wilderness material. The series focuses on the biblical imagery of wilderness and desert, and how this plays out in spiritual habits such as simplicity, silence and even sorrow. The Church Service Pack contains free access to downloadable digital resources such as PowerPoints, videos and more. [Click here for details.](#)



A fresh look for Table Talk

Table Talk is a game of conversations which has been undergoing a complete redesign to help reduce the cost of production. The first games to be produced in this new format are Table Talk for Friends, Blokes and Fourth Agers. If you don't have a formal Lent programme, consider using Table Talk for Easter to encourage conversations around the themes of hope, justice, forgiveness, suffering, evil and death. [Click here for details and to order a pack.](#)



The Real Easter Egg

2020 is the tenth anniversary of The Real Easter Egg. Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has an Easter story book in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and supports charitable projects. For Easter 2020, there are five types of Real Easter Eggs available, all with new content. [Click here for details and to place an order.](#)



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:



Whitley Lectures - February - May

This year's lecture will be given by Robert Parkinson on the theme: *Finding A Friend: The Baptist Encounter With Judaism*. It will examine questions such as: Are Baptist churches sometimes guilty of unwitting anti-Judaism? What is the state of play for Baptist-Jewish relations? Drawing on the positive side of Baptist history and practice, it will offer guidelines for encouraging a greater regard for Judaism and a closer friendship with Jews. [Click here for the current dates and venues.](#)



Crucible Course - February - April

The Crucible course is open to anyone interested in thinking afresh about discipleship, mission and church in a changing context. [Click here for more information or to book your place](#), or contact Rachel Jay: rachel@urbanexpression.org.uk



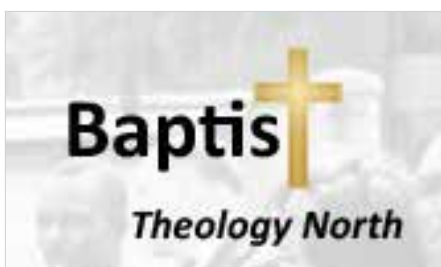
JPIT National Conference - Saturday 7 March

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

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



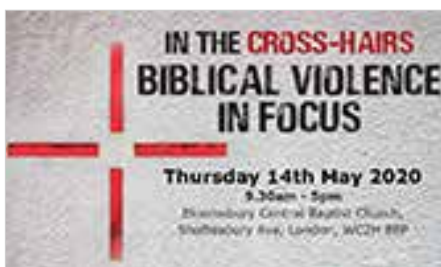
Baptist Theology North - Friday 20 March

This day at the Blackley Centre, on the theme of 'Action, spirituality and change' will include keynote speakers: the Revd Dr Ian Stackhouse addressing an active spirituality and the Revd Dr Clare McBeath on environmental theology ... plus short paper seminars from local Baptists. Contact Sally Nelson at sally.nelson@stchild.org for more details, to offer a paper, or to book.



Baptist Assembly - 8-10 May

We are looking forward to **Baptist Assembly in Bournemouth** this year. Like last year's Assembly, we will be including a 'Networking Day' on the Saturday which will be an opportunity to meet with other groups and organisations to share ideas and expertise. Will also be welcoming Shane Claiborne as our guest speaker for the weekend. We really hope you will be able to join us. **Booking for weekend tickets is now open!**



In the Cross-Hairs: Biblical Violence in Focus - Thursday 14 May

The second annual symposium of the **Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence** (CSBV) will be held at Bloomsbury Baptist Church in London. The keynote speaker will be Paul Copan, author of 'Did God Really Command Genocide?' and 'Is God a Moral Monster?' [Click here for details and to book your place.](#)



Living with Suffering and the Crucified God - Thurs 25 June

The **Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence** (CSBV) invites you to attend this workshop at Bristol Baptist College looking at how the Bible re-writes the story of divine violence to help us find our way through the challenges of human experience. It will be led by the Revd Dr Andy Angel - an Anglican priest in parish ministry in West Sussex and former Vice Principal of St John's College, Nottingham. [Click here for more information and booking.](#)

Other featured events:

Thy Kingdom Come Tour Events - February and March

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. This year it's taking place from 21-31 May. Free two-hour interactive workshops, called Inspire and Enable, are being offered to churches, giving an opportunity to find out more about how to get involved, and receive free sample resources. [Click here to find out more.](#)



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.**



Rural Ministries Regional Conference - Saturday 7 March

Exponential: *growing disciples by every believer through every opportunity.* Many view the rural church as small and inconsequential but come and explore how exponential growth through a focus of making disciples who make disciples, who in turn make disciples, can be seen where you are. Through four interactive sessions we will see how we can positively impact those around us in our rural communities. [Click here for full details and booking.](#)



New for May 2020 - BCYOUTH - 23-24 May

Join us for three days of worship, equipping and encounter at **Big Church Day Out** with thousands of young people from across the UK. Come together for four sessions over three mornings, then have your fix of festival fun in the afternoons; getting up-close-and-personal with some of the best artists in the world. Finally, as the rest of BCDO winds down for the night, you'll reunite as BCY for exclusive After Parties. Contact natalie@bigchurchdayout.com for more information.



The Passion - LAMPS production looking for venues

Can we help you to reach out to your community powerfully this Easter?

Co-written by Baptist minister Chris Matthewman, 'The Passion' is an inspiring and hugely accessible LAMPS production that has been touring with great success for the last three years to churches, cathedrals and schools in the UK - no venue too large or too small. The events leading up to the first Easter are recounted from the viewpoints of Simon Peter, Mary Magdalen and a Roman centurion named Marcus in this simply staged production which speaks with enormous power. For [more information and details on how to book a LAMPS show](#), please see their website or call Sam on 01235 543087 to see how it might work for you.

