



Update: December 2020

Dear Friends

As we enter Advent and look ahead to Christmas we are very aware that many of our usual waymarkers are missing this year. So, finding ourselves in unexpected places, in the middle of shifting paths we offer you these resources.

Can we particularly remind you about the **Advent Quiet Day** on **Thursday 3 December** being led by Beth Powney and Geoff Colmer? Let's step aside together and come in prayer to our Father who loves us and who is I AM and is in the midst of the storm with us.



May you find the surprise and joy of new markers on the path and fresh springs of blessing this Christmas.

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

This month's featured stories:



'Online worship has fulfilled a long hoped-for dream' - says minister Glen Graham



Unity in prayer - daily, ecumenical prayer meetings during lockdown



Planning a Covid Christmas - a theme from the Small Church Connexion webinar

News:



Presidency Nominations - 2022-23

We are now inviting nominations for the person who will serve as Baptist Union President in 2022-23. The President may be female or male, lay or ordained, and will be chosen because of gifts and experience which will help to communicate our Baptists Together vision and mission priorities. [Click here for details of how to make a nomination](#). **Nominations must be received by 31 December 2020.**



EU Settlement Scheme

Is there someone in your congregation or community who needs to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme? This is the UK Government's programme to give EU citizens a new immigration status after Brexit. However, some people may find it more difficult to apply, or not know they need to apply at all. If you know someone who might need some support applying to stay in the UK, then check out [JPIT's handy guide for church leaders](#). This link also includes access to the online session led by JPIT explaining more about supporting an application to the EU Settlement Scheme.



Reset the Debt

The impact of Covid-19 has been profoundly unequal. The poorest in our communities have been hit hardest by lockdown debt. If we don't act now, families could be held back by Covid debt for years to come. Our response to this crisis is being expressed alongside JPIT and Church Action on Poverty through the [#ResetTheDebt campaign](#). The next stage in the campaign is to write to the chancellor and ask him to create a comprehensive and just solution to the unique problem of lockdown debt. Baptist Union General Secretary, Lynn Green has signed this letter; if you are a church leader, perhaps you would consider joining her and hundreds of others by [adding your name to the letter here](#).



Covid – church on the front foot

A bright spot of 2020 was the resurgence of community spirit during the Lockdown. Building on a pre-Lockdown initiative in Birmingham, *'as one'* is a new nationwide idea to help in creating ongoing links, generating real community, real friendships and a new way of 'loving your neighbour' in practice! Now is the time to think forward to a post-Covid world and prepare for what we could do in partnership in our local communities. [Click here to find out more](#).



Used stamps appeal

Please don't throw your used postage stamps away! Baptists Together would be delighted to receive your used postage stamps which can be used to raise funds for Home Mission. All stamps should be cut from envelopes etc leaving approx ¼ inch of paper around them. If possible please send Foreign stamps separately, marking clearly on the outside of the envelope 'Foreign Stamps'. Please send your stamps to: Baptist Union Stamps, P.O. Box 6198, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 9XT. To receive an acknowledgement, please include your email address. [Click here for more information about donating stamps and other collectible items](#).



A Faith Engagement Review

The Government's Faith Engagement Adviser, Colin Bloom, has launched an open consultation to collect views that will underpin a Faith Engagement Review. This consultation poses a series of questions around how those of all faiths, or none, perceive the government's engagement with faith organisations. [Click here](#) if you would like [to complete this consultation questionnaire](#) by 11 December.

This month's featured resources:

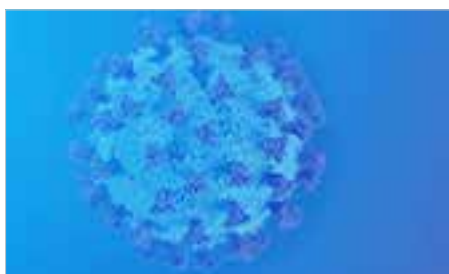


December Prayer Diary

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

- London Baptists
- South Wales Baptist Association
- Christmas
- Those working to end the pandemic

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



Coronavirus Guidance

We are continually updating our guidelines for churches to reflect the latest Government guidance and ensure that everyone is kept safe. Please see the [Essential Guidance area](#) of our website for the latest information.



Advent and Christmas resources

This year our celebrations of Advent and Christmas will look a bit different to 'normal'. Since our last Update email, we have added more resources to inspire you as you plan your services - thank you to everyone who has contributed to this page. These are available on our website at www.baptist.org.uk/advent2020. If you have come across any other resources that you'd like to share, please email us at faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk



Listening area of our website

Today we are launching a new area of our website dedicated to listening well. It features listening resources, perspectives on areas of our shared life where there may be pain and disagreement, as well as insights into missional listening. [Click here for the listening area](#). It is a work in progress, so if you have found a particular resource helpful as you have journeyed with others to enable listening, please do share it with us at faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk



A Flexible Framework for Unity in Mission Toolkit

Following the successful publication of 'A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission', this new Toolkit provides an easy-to use framework to help local churches to collaborate with confidence and flexibility, developing the right agreement for their joint venture. The Toolkit guides readers step by step, explaining a variety of different agreements you could use, and helping you decide which will work best for your group. The Toolkit was produced by the Baptist, Methodist, Church of England and United Reformed Church National Ecumenical Officers, working with a group of volunteer County Ecumenical Officers, and can be [accessed via the Churches Together in England website](#).



Table Talk for Wellbeing

2020 has been a challenging year, and for many a major area of concern is the impact the pandemic has had on people's mental health and wellbeing. This latest release in the Table Talk range is based on the '5 Ways to Wellbeing', a set of evidence-based actions which promote people's wellbeing. For use in smaller groups or online, this resource is a great way to connect church and community as we navigate these difficult days and find shared language around our mental and emotional wellbeing. [Click here for details](#).



Apply

Apply is a hands on approach to living out God's word for teenagers. Using the 9 Ways, each session allows young people to explore how the Bible relates to every area of their lives by using creative, inspiring, and hands-on activities that can also help to nourish emotional well-being. [Click here to find out more](#), including the option to download a free pdf with four promotional sessions from the book.



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 online events:



Baptists Together Prayer Broadcasts - 19:00 Wednesday

Since the coronavirus restrictions came into force, we have been offering an online time of prayer led by our General Secretary Lynn Green and other guests. [Please use the link \[www.baptist.org.uk/prayerbroadcasts\]\(http://www.baptist.org.uk/prayerbroadcasts\)](#) to publicise these prayer broadcasts to your church family. Previous broadcasts are also available to watch from the same page on our website.



Advent Quiet Day - Thursday 3 December

After the fantastic response to our last online Quiet Day in June, Geoff Colmer, BUGB vice president and team leader at Central Baptist Association, and Beth Powney, team leader of Eastern Baptist Association, are back! They will offer us a further guided opportunity to be still and reflect, timed to coincide with the start of Advent. The day will run from 10:00 - 15:00 with input throughout the day and plenty of space for us to sit alone in the presence of God. [Join the webinar on YouTube](#) and [find more details on our website](#).



Fresh Streams National Leadership Conference - 11-13 January 2021

Fresh Streams is moving online for 2021 with their National Leadership Conference. The theme will be 'Back to the Future' using Jeremiah 6:16 as the key text, recognising that there is no return to what has been described as 'normal' as we look ahead into 2021. The church needs to be both prophetic and apostolic and be 'co-creators of the future with God rather than curators of the past for God' (to quote Roy Searle). [Click here for more details](#).



Crucible Course Modules - January - March

As there is no prospect of running the Crucible course face-to-face any time soon, the team is offering further online modules next year:

- *On the Edge* - examines the dynamics of mission and ministry in marginal urban and rural communities and offers biblical and practical insights
- *Becoming Human* - probes the dynamics of discipleship and asks how we can become more fully human as followers of the Son of Man.

Click here for [further information, including dates and registration details](#) or contact admin@urbanexpression.org.uk



Emotional Rollercoaster training - January - March

With thanks to the [Children, Young People and Families \(CYF\) Round Table](#), training from [Transforming Lives for Good \(TLG\)](#) on their new Emotional Rollercoaster resource will be coming to all our regional associations. [Click here for more details](#), and contact your local association to book your place for this online training on Zoom.



Theology Live 2021 - Friday 29 January

Theology Live is a one day online conference with papers by Baptists engaged in postgraduate research. The event brings them together to share their thinking, fostering a community of research amongst British Baptists. It will comprise a series of short papers, reflecting the diversity of current Baptist theological engagement, with opportunities to interact with speakers. Now in its fourth year running, it is always an interesting day. Attendance is limited, so [secure your tickets now](#).



Baptist World Congress - 7-10 July 2021

The Baptist World Congress is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for Baptists worldwide to stand together. For the first time in our history, Congress will be offered as a fully virtual event, making it more accessible than ever before. Join us online as the BWA family continues to stand together during this critical time – celebrating our unity across borders, languages, and ethnicities. [Click here for details and to register](#).

Webinar recordings

Don't forget that you can catch up on all our webinar recordings which are available from our Resource Library. [Click here to find them](#).