



Dear Friends

Update: January 2021

It is customary at the start of January to wish everyone a Happy New Year, but in the current very difficult circumstances our prayer for you is that you will know God's peace, *shalom*, in your life at this time. We pray that in 2021 you and your family, your neighbours and your friends, apart and yet together, are able to glimpse the hope we have in Christ.

It is this hope, offered to us in and through the love of God, that leads us on. We trust that the One who is Lord of all knows the way we cannot always see, and it is the Lord we seek as we step out into uncharted territory. Sometimes it can feel a lonely place to be walking, particularly when we are physically distanced from each other, but as the writer to the Hebrews reminds us, we are surrounded by a great a cloud of witnesses. So let us look to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith and run!

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

The resources, stories and news we are sharing with you in this Update are to help you as you run with perseverance. We hope that there will be things here that are a blessing to you and a reassurance you are not alone in the steps you take and in the work you do.

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

This month's featured stories:



**A Happy New Year?
A better alternative to
making resolutions**



**Imagining a new normal:
analogue and digital -
integrate to a better future**



**Reflections on the Baptists
Together Prayer Broadcasts -
from Lynn Green**

News:



A New Year Video: What does it mean to belong to Baptists Together?

As Baptists Together we commit ourselves to being a movement led by the Spirit of God. Celebrating diversity we will value, trust and respect one another in Christ. So what does it mean to belong to Baptists Together? It means we're part of God's bigger picture as he paints his Kingdom. This new video, produced in partnership with The Fuelcast, can be [downloaded and shared with your church](#).



Election for President - 2022-23

Nominations for the President of the Baptist Union 2022-23 have now closed. Details of those who have been nominated will be sent to every church and minister before the end of January. We would like as many as possible to be involved with the process of discernment, so please look out for this email, and share the profiles with your Church Meeting. Voting this year will primarily be online and will be open until 31 March.



Baptists Together magazine - coming soon

Ministers, Church Secretaries and subscribers will be receiving their copies of the Spring edition of our *Baptists Together* magazine next week. This is an edition about identity, drawing on the events of 2020 and listening to some of the conversations about who we are and what our call looks like at this moment in time. [Our website will be updated next week](#) with articles from this new edition so you will be able to share them easily with others in your church family. Additional printed copies, and subscriptions, are also available to [order from our online shop](#).



EU Settlement Scheme

Is there someone in your congregation or community who needs to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme? This 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](#).



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](#).

This month's featured resources:

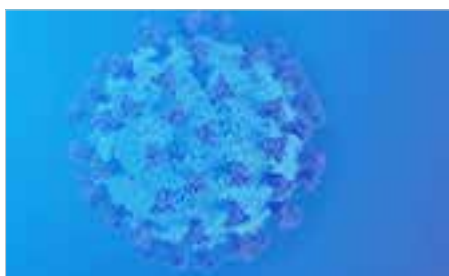


January Prayer Diary

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

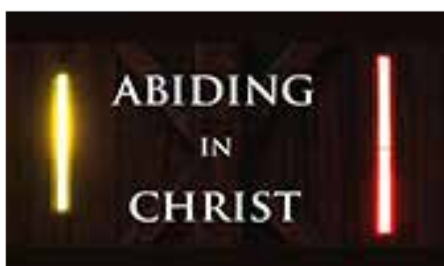
- For peace and stability in 2021
- The East Midland Baptist Association
- The South west Baptist Association
- The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Baptists Together Safeguarding Team

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, which has been updated to reflect the latest lockdown restrictions.



18-25 January: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Materials are now available for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Prepared by the sisters of the Monastic Community of Grandchamp, Switzerland, the theme this year is 'Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit', based on John 15:1-17. The sisters invite us to join with them in their traditions of prayer and silence. Click here to [download this year's resources in English and Welsh](#).



Breaking County Lines

County lines is becoming one of the most prevalent forms of modern slavery in our country. Breaking County Lines is designed as a resource to enable churches and communities to understand and raise awareness of the scale of the problem and spot the signs of its presence. It also looks at ways of building resilience in our communities with an emphasis on the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Clewer Initiative are running a Train the Trainer Course on 26 January, 2 February and 9 February from 7-9pm to equip those working with children and young people who would like to run their own Breaking County Lines Training within their communities. [Click here for more information](#).



Big Start Assemblies

Big Start Assemblies originally created for schools are now being made available to churches for the first time. That's 124 ready to use assemblies complete with a plan, song (with backing track), film or animation and interactive games. Every assembly can be chosen by a value such as courage or hope or a complete bible series such as Giants of Faith. [Click here for more details.](#)



Listening area of our website

In December we launched 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



Table Talk for Wellbeing

A major area of concern for many 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:



Fresh Streams National Leadership Conference - 11-13 Jan

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.](#)



Making the most of a 360 degree review - 13 January

The Baptists Together CMD framework asks all ministers to submit their ministry to review at least once over three years. The recommended tool for this is called a 360 degree review, in which views from a broad range of those who see us in role are collated by someone we trust to provide supportive but honest feedback. This webinar will look at how to make the most of this type of review in its basic form as well as point to more rigorous ways of using it. [Click here for details and to join.](#)



Redeeming the Present - 19-21 January

Learn to be more present to Jesus in daily life in this online retreat led by Baptist minister Shaun Lambert. Shaun will introduce us to a mindful scaffolding for health and of God in the face of stress, loss, loneliness and depression. Within this general supportive framework in support of living life in all its fullness he will address experiences specifically relating to stress, loss, loneliness and depression. [Click here for more information and to book.](#)



Five habits of CMD: Workshop - 21 January and 4 February

In October 2020, Baptists Together launched a CMD Handbook setting out expectations of recognised Baptist ministers for their continuing ministerial development (CMD). The approach centres on five habits of CMD which ministers are asked to adapt to their own needs and contexts. This workshop (delivered in two two-hour sessions 10am-12pm and 1-3pm) supports ministers in that process of adapting the five habits. Cost £35. [Click here to book for the workshop on 21 January](#) and the [workshop on 4 February](#).



Becoming a Sight Loss Friendly Church - January-March

Torch Trust, the Christian sight loss charity, are holding free 30-minute Taster sessions about becoming a Sight Loss Friendly Church (SLFC) on 21 and 26 January, 23 and 24 Feb and 18 and 23 March. These interactive Zoom sessions offer an opportunity to hear about all the benefits of this free resource, as well as a chance to meet the SLFC team and ask questions. [Click here for more information and to book your place](#) or email slfc@torchtrust.org



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* - the dynamics of mission and ministry in marginal urban and rural communities along with biblical and practical insights
- *Becoming Human* - the dynamics of discipleship and 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.



Churches' Refugee Network Zoom Meeting - 28 January

Join this first CRN meeting of 2021 to help mark the launch of *God With Us* – a new resource for clergy, preachers, worship leaders and all Christians involved in organising group prayer or discussion on the theme of refugees, migration and sanctuary. This could be for churches that have a particular ministry to asylum seekers and refugees, and any church wishing to mark 'Sanctuary Sunday'. [Click here to register](#).



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](#).



What's the benefit of pastoral supervision? - 10 February

The benefit to ministers in having a safe place to talk through ministry matters with a trained supervisor has been proved in both quantitative and qualitative assessment. This webinar from Tim Fergusson in conversation with Sue Clements-Jewery will look at what pastoral supervision is, what we would gain from it, and how may it be accessed. [Click here for more information and to join the webinar](#).



Black Light - April-June

Urban Expression and the Ascension Trust are running this online course over 8 evenings exploring various topics, including: The Black presence in the Bible and church history, The experience of Black communities in the UK, Reverse mission and multicultural church, Engaging with racism in church and society, Black and White in partnership. This is an updated version of a course first developed by Les Isaac and Stuart Murray Williams, which ran in London in the 1990s, and will be offered as a freestanding module alongside the popular Crucible course. Speakers include Ben Lindsay, Kate Coleman, Robert Beckford and Bev Thomas. [Click here for details](#), and [to book](#).



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](#).