



Update: February 2021

Dear Friends

So often in the Gospels we see Jesus turn aside and listen to the cries of the most marginalised. Even when the disciples tried to shoo people away, Jesus stopped, took time and listened. There's the occasion when the children gathered around Jesus, or the time when the Canaanite woman came seeking healing for her daughter or the instance when Jesus stopped to hear the cry of the woman as they walked to Jairus' house. All of them given time to be heard, time for a conversation, time for change. All of them unseen and rejected by friends and neighbours and by society, all of them marginalised.

As a Team we are trying to listen carefully. We want to enable, encourage and equip you in the places and spaces to which God has called you, so it is important that we listen to your stories, to the concerns you see and hear. If you have things to share or stories to tell, please do let us know.

This month's Update highlights resources, stories and reflections that may help us all to listen, to begin conversations, to bring hope and perhaps a smile. As we continue to walk through the colder winter months in lockdown we want to bring you the assurance of our prayers and let you know that we are listening.

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

This month's featured stories:



'Keep shining your light in whatever circumstances you find yourself'



Baptist church buildings used as vaccination centres as programme accelerates



We are what we sing - Simon Woodman encourages us to write our own hymns

News:



Key messages from our Core Leadership Team - January 2021

The Core Leadership Team draws together leaders from across Baptists Together, not as representatives of a particular constituency, but to seek to enable leadership for our whole Movement. A key feature of their Wednesday morning meetings has been prayer. Click here for a [summary of their discussions during January](#).



Election for President - 2022-23

Following the nomination process at the end of 2020, we have received four nominations for the President of the Baptist Union 2022-23. Details of the nominees have been sent to every church and minister by email where possible, along with details of how to vote. Please share the profiles with your Church Meeting so that as many as possible can be involved with the process of discernment. Voting this year will primarily be online and will be open **until 31 March**.



Is your church Hong Kong ready?

Last year the UK government made a pledge to the people of Hong Kong in the light of the clamp down following their pro-democracy demonstrations. That promise came into effect at the end of January and it is estimated that between 130,000 and 300,000 people from Hong Kong will be arriving in the UK over the next year. Simon Goddard explores how Baptists are responding, and what your church can do. [Click here for details](#), and to watch a recording of the event for churches hosted by Krish Kandiah last month exploring these issues.



MA Mission prize launched

Churches Together in England (CTE), alongside the Mission Research Network, is looking for high quality, recently passed MA theses to add to a small but growing repository of MAs and PhDs which will be made available on their website. Students can submit their work directly to CTE, or Theological Educational Institutions can propose the work of some of their best MA candidates. The prize consists of a £100 cash gift and an opportunity for the MA to appear in an edited format in the recently launched journal *Ecclesial Futures*, published by Wipf and Stock. The deadline for submission is 30 April 2021. [Click here for full details](#).



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. By the end of 2020, over 900 people had written to their MP about Reset The Debt. 425 MPs have been contacted, and the campaign has been featured in the national news. But JPIT is still calling on the Government to recognise and respond to the mounting Covid-debt crisis weighing heavily on low-income families. Please [click here to find out more and write to your MP](#).



missionaladventure portal

In late 2019 a small team at RiverTree was tasked to collect 100 stories of Missional Adventure to inspire the church. Using written articles, interviews, podcasts and videos these 100 narratives cover the length and breadth of the country. Why not [have a look at the missionaladventure portal](#) on our website and [read Carol Richardson's report on collecting these 100 stories](#).

This month's featured resources:

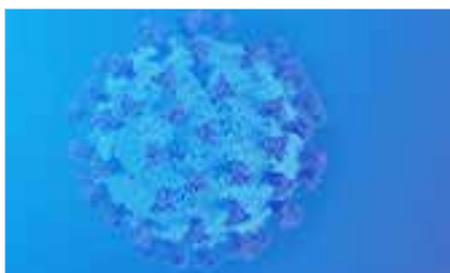


February Prayer Diary

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

- The South Eastern Baptist Association
- Racial Justice Sunday
- The Core Leadership Team
- Fairtrade Fortnight

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.



Coronavirus Prayer area of our website

During these difficult times it is vital that we keep praying, as individuals and within our churches and the wider community. We have recently [updated the prayer and reflection area of our website](#). This has prayers and reflections for personal and church use. We will be adding more to these pages in the coming weeks. If you have written a prayer or reflection that may be helpful to others, please [get in touch with us at \[faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk\]\(mailto:faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk\)](#)



Stay and Pray

Our Joint Public Issues team has been sharing daily prayers for the world since the lockdowns began last March, encouraging us all to lift up our eyes and pray for justice and peace. You can follow their daily prayer prompts on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or [sign up to receive them by email](#) on the JPIT website.



Faith in Politics Podcast

January's JPIT podcast is entitled 'A prophetic voice in politics' in which JPIT Parliamentary interns Meg and Rodney interviewed Louise Davies, Director of Christians on the Left. Louise reflected on the influence of faith in her political journey and the contribution Christians can make to politics. The next podcast will be available soon. [Click here to listen](#).



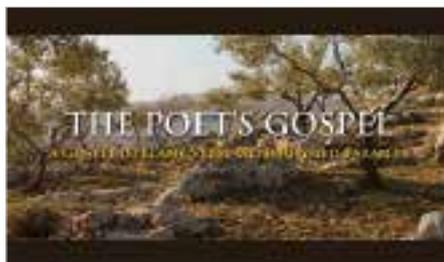
Call and Care

Free video training is now available for local churches to equip their volunteers to offer telephone support to those in need in their community. Call and Care, is a new initiative developed by Premier Lifeline: the National Christian Helpline, with funding from the UK Government Coronavirus Emergency Fund. The twelve short videos can help prepare the team of call-makers for their role. For information, to view the free videos and to sign-up please [visit the Call and Care site](#).



The Lent Challenge 2021

The [2021 Bible Tour Lent Challenge](#) from christianity.org.uk is a 40-day invitation to take a deep dive into the Bible. Helen Paynter, Tutor in Biblical Studies at Bristol Baptist College, set herself a lockdown project of releasing a video each day, until she had gone through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. If you didn't follow these videos last year, why not use them through Lent as your Lent Challenge this year?



The Poet's Gospel

This year's Churches Together in Britain and Ireland Lent study is *The Poet's Gospel: a gospel in blank verse with rhymed parables*. The course is grounded in one man's spirituality. John Alan Davis is in his 90s, a retired headmaster, a poet and a dramatist who wrote this gospel as a spiritual exercise whilst his wife was suffering from dementia and after her death. It brought him comfort, and it will bring us not just comfort but new insights, unsettling challenges and new ways of encountering Jesus. Click here [to find out more and download the study guide and sound files](#).



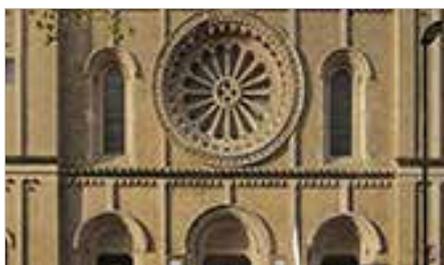
The Passion stories by LAMPs Collective – Lent course 2021

Six vividly compelling stories, performed direct to camera, recall the first Easter from the perspectives of Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and a young centurion called Marcus. Accompanying devotional material offers reflections, questions to ponder and a related prayer. Ideal for small groups as well as individuals, or inclusion within services, the LAMPs Lent course is free to churches and individuals, with the option of donating to their work if you choose to use the material. Click here [to access all the resources](#) (including samples).



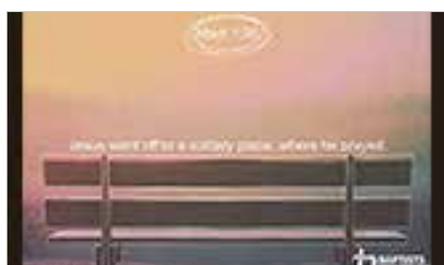
Where You Go, I Will Go - new study on the book of Ruth

What does it mean to walk with someone from poverty and desperation, to a place of hope? This new contemplative study resource, written by Baptist minister Keith Parr and his wife Karen, encourages readers to consider just that. It is a 40-day series of Bible studies, reflections and prayers on the book of Ruth, suitable for Lent or any other time of year. [Click here for more information](#).



Theology Live 2021

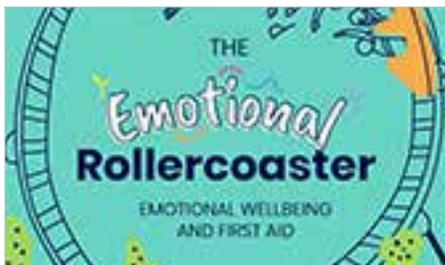
Theology Live is an annual one day conference for Baptists involved in postgraduate theological research to share their work. If you missed the event at the end of January, you can [listen online to recordings of the papers presented](#).



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:



Emotional Rollercoaster training - February - 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.



Creating Video Content - 4, 11 and 18 February

This series of webinars from the South West Baptist Association is for anyone from churches and/or other Christian organisations who create videos that are published online. You don't need any experience of creating video content to attend... just a willingness to learn. There will be opportunity to ask relevant questions and contribute to the discussion. The webinars are free, but [please book your place](#) to receive a confirmation email with a link to access the Zoom details you will need to attend.



Leading a Church in a Post-Covid Frontline Landscape - 9 February and 16 March

How can a frontline-friendly church respond to the massive changes over recent months? What does it look like to lead a church in this changing frontline landscape? In this two-part afternoon series from LICC, you'll explore how we as church leaders can navigate all this and more in a way that equips God's people for living well on their changing frontlines. [Click here for details and to book your place.](#)



Whole Life Discipleship in a Post-Covid Frontline Landscape - 9 February and 16 March

What does whole-life discipleship look like amidst the massive changes over recent months? When so much has changed so quickly, how do we remain whole-life disciples and ministers on our frontlines? What Bible passages might be particularly poignant for such a time as this? This two-part evening series from LICC is for anyone looking to consider the changing frontline landscape – both their own and others'. [Click here for details and to book your place.](#)



Crucible Course Modules - February - March

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



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.](#)



Racial Justice Sunday - 14 February

Racial Justice Sunday is an occasion for Christians in Britain to collectively focus on racial justice. It began in 1995, and takes place on the second Sunday in February. Racial Justice Sunday resources are produced by CTBI's sponsoring churches. These materials will enable you to Remember, Reflect and Respond to racial justice matters. [Click here for more details.](#)

[Click here for more details.](#)



Preparing for Climate Sunday - Thursday 18 February

JPIT are holding an event at 11:30 with [Climate Sunday](#), the biggest UK ecumenical action in the lead up to COP26. This event is designed to equip people to help their church run a Climate Sunday (a service based around the climate in the run-up to COP26) and to equip them to get people excited about talking about climate justice in churches. It's a free half-hour event with James from Climate Sunday. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

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BMS Explore Day - Friday 19 February

Exploring your call to serve - whether you feel a clear call to serve overseas, or are just beginning to discern how God might use your skills. Coming along to a BMS Explore Day is the best way to see how BMS World Mission can equip you in your passion to serve overseas. You'll be able to attend talks and discussions to find out more about BMS, how our different overseas programmes work and how we'll be able to support you throughout your time serving with us. [Click here to find out more and to sign up](#) for this online Day.

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Church Action on Poverty Sunday - 21 February

Give, act and pray to ensure people on the margins are fully involved in the world we build as we emerge from the pandemic. Join churches around the UK in prayer, giving and action this Church Action on Poverty Sunday. Share a vision for a society founded on compassion and justice, where all people are able to exercise dignity, agency and power. [Click here for resources for your worship service.](#)

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Becoming a Sight Loss Friendly Church - February-March

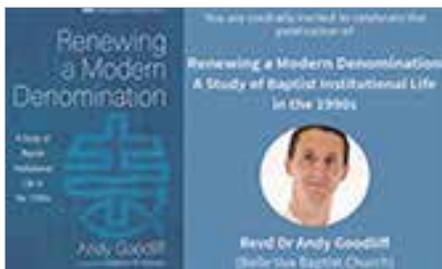
Torch Trust, the Christian sight loss charity, are holding free 30-minute Taster sessions about becoming a Sight Loss Friendly Church (SLFC) on 23 and 24 Feb and 18 and 23 March. These interactive Zoom sessions offer an opportunity to hear about all the benefits of this free resource, as well as a chance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

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'Waiting and Accepting' – a Lent Quiet Day - Thursday 25 February

A much-needed opportunity in these troubled times for anyone in the Baptist family to take time out... to pause and rest in the goodness and sovereignty of God. Beth Powney and Mark Fairweather-Tall, two of our association team leaders, will lead us in this third online national quiet day since the beginning of the pandemic. [Click here for details and to join in the Quiet Day.](#)



Online book launch - Friday 26 February

You are invited to celebrate the publication of *Renewing a Modern Denomination: A study of Baptist institutional life in the 1990s* by the Revd Dr Andy Goodliff (Belle Vue Baptist Church). The online launch starting at 12:30 will feature a panel discussion with Prof Paul Fiddes (Regent's Park College), the Revd Dr Lina Toth (Scottish Baptist College) and the Revd Tony Peck (European Baptist Federation). To register, please email christine.joynes@regents.ox.ac.uk



World Day of Prayer - Friday 5 March

This year's World Day of Prayer material has been written by women in Vanuatu on the theme of 'Build on a strong foundation'. Whilst meeting to pray in person may not be possible this year, the [resources are available to download](#) and there is also [a video about Vanuatu](#) which could be shared during an online prayer meeting.



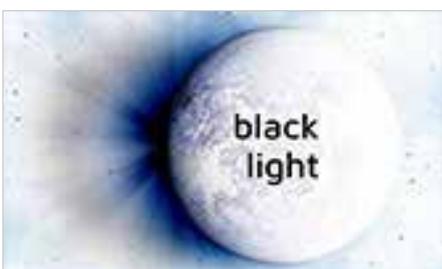
Small Church Connexion Spring Retreat - Saturday 6 March

This online retreat will be led by Sandra Kimber on the theme 'Guided by a star...' Join with others and take some time out to see what God is saying in these strange and difficult days. [Click here for more information and to book your place.](#)



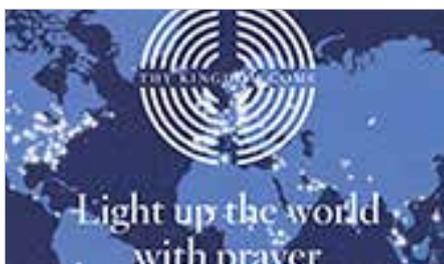
Five habits of CMD: Workshop - Wednesday 21 April

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](#)



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](#).



Thy Kingdom Come - 13-23 May

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer. [Click here for details and resources.](#)



Baptist Assembly - 14-16 May

We are delighted to confirm that [Shane Claiborne has agreed to be our keynote speaker](#) for the weekend. One notable feature is that we are planning to broadcast an online service on the morning of Sunday 16 May so Baptist churches and their congregations can all participate in the event. Full information about this year's online Assembly will soon be available, but please note the dates and plan to join in.



Baptist World Congress - 7-10 July

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.](#)