

Baptists together

A PRAYER initiative that brings together our Baptist Union and seeks to place Jesus at the centre of everything we do is taking place between now and next year's Assembly.

Two crosses featuring the names of Baptist churches are currently journeying around the country.

The crosses were created at the recent Assembly: people wrote the names of their churches on them while delegates prayed for Jesus to be the centre of our churches, Associations, colleges and Union.

In that session General Secretary Lynn Green had a vision that the crosses could be sent around our churches in the coming year and continue to inspire prayer for one another.

A letter from Lynn and Jonathan Somerville, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church who led the Assembly prayer session, is being sent to Associations explaining the thinking.

The crosses have begun their journeys in the Heart of England and Southern Counties Baptist Associations, and will continue to travel around Associations until next May, when the Baptist Assembly is being held in Peterborough.

Those receiving them are being encouraged to pray:



1 That Jesus would be at the centre of our churches, and that His kingdom would be seen as local disciples seek to participate in the mission of God where they are.

2 That Jesus would be the centre of our regional Associations, giving life and strength to the church, and sharing resources, wisdom and fellowship in such a way that churches and ministers are better equipped to share in the mission of God.

3 That Jesus would be the centre of our Union. That from the way we share life beyond our Associations and through our national resource in Didcot our whole Union would be marked by a deep desire to play our part in

the mission of God.

Prayer is also encouraged for all those mentioned on the crosses. An open Facebook page (called "Baptist Union Prayer Crosses") has been created to enable people to upload photos when they receive them. A prayer written about our Union for the Baptist Assembly by Phil Jump, regional minister team leader of the North Western Baptist Association, is also being shared (see page 3). Any prophetic words, particular scriptures, or reflections following praying with the cross can be sent to Jonathan.

'There may be other ways you feel God is calling you to pray, so please don't feel restricted by these suggestions,' Lynn and Jonathan wrote.

'Once again, we're grateful to you for sharing in this prayer journey between Assemblies, and pray that God would encourage you with faith and hope as you bring before Him your prayers for our life together.'

Writing on the Facebook page, David Kerrigan, General Director of BMS World Mission, said, 'One of the crosses was in our association (SCBA) over recent weeks, and at our church last Sunday.

'A wonderful visible reminder of our connectedness.'

'Kairos' moment for church

A WEST Midlands church believes it is in the right place at the right time after celebrating the opening of its coffee shop.

The arrival of Kairos Coffee comes less than six months after the new church halls and community facilities of Shirley Baptist Church were officially opened. The work has taken place in partnership with the development of the new Parkgate shopping precinct, which only received planning approval in 2011 and is helping to regenerate Shirley.

Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning the right time or opportune moment, and its use here 'is a reminder of the way in which everything has come together for the redevelopment of the church's premises and opening of a coffee shop at a strategic location alongside the new Parkgate', said minister Paul Campion.

The Kairos opening was



The team at Kairos Coffee with the Mayor of Solihull

performed by the Mayor of Solihull, Cllr Joe Tildesley, along with Bernard Tyler, one of the volunteers in the shop. Following this, the Mayor visited the new Shirley Library next door to the church, also open to the public for the first time, before heading across to Asda for its grand opening ceremony.

'There was a magnificent atmosphere throughout the day as large crowds enjoyed visiting the new facilities and open spaces

within the Parkgate scheme,' Paul said.

'This is a very exciting stage of our church's redevelopment, and we look forward to welcoming many customers to Kairos Coffee to enjoy the excellent food and drinks, and to be of service to the local community through the friendship and welcome offered in the coffee shop and through the other activities at Shirley Baptist Church.'

Modern Slavery Bill welcomed

TOUGHER penalties for human trafficking, announced in the Queen's Speech on Wednesday, have been welcomed.

The measures in the Modern Slavery Bill give new powers to courts and ensure compensation is paid to victims.

In addition an anti-slavery commissioner will be established to co-ordinate the response of law-enforcement agencies. The Home Office wants the Modern Slavery Bill to become law before the next election.

The Christian charity Hope for Justice, which exists to end human trafficking and slavery in the UK, tweeted: 'Delighted to see victims of human trafficking

and modern slavery prioritised in the #QueensSpeech 2014'.

Elsewhere Tearfund chief executive Matthew Frost welcomed the commitment to eradicating human trafficking, but stressed the Bill must reach 'beyond our borders'.

Through its No Child Taken campaign, Tearfund aims to protect 50,000 vulnerable children worldwide from trafficking, disasters and disease by the end of 2015.

Mr Frost said, 'The scourge of human trafficking is a 21st century scandal, and we welcome this government's commitment to eradicating it from this country.

'Traffickers often prey on

families living in desperate poverty who try to give their children a better life by sending them halfway across the world in good faith, only to find they are caught up in horrendous slavery.

'This Bill must reach beyond our borders, incentivising aid recipients to fight modern slavery and mandating supply chain transparency if we are to win the battle against trafficking.'

More than a million children are trafficked every year.

For more on Hope for Justice, visit <http://hopeforjustice.org.uk>
For more on Tearfund <http://www.tearfund.org/nochildtaken/>

A PRAYER FOR OUR UNION

*We walk together humbly
Inspired not by who we are, but what Christ can make us*

*Recognising that in our fragility, God's strength is made complete
We place ourselves, our churches, our hopes, our disappointments
We place our Union into your hands O Lord*

*Forgive us if our vision has been limited by the resources that we can muster
Rather than infinite possibilities of the one into whose hands we are invited to place them;*

*When our instinct has been to dismiss the needs of others
Rather than embrace the opportunities for faith and service that they reveal;*

*When we have clung to the little we have
Rather than abandon ourselves to the purposes and possibilities of your Kingdom*

*Anoint us afresh with your Spirit
Unite us afresh in your love
Make our hearts restless in pursuit of your Kingdom*

*Grant us courage to embrace the adventure of your Gospel
Inspire us, fill us, send us
That you may be revealed and encountered
In our every shared endeavour.*

AMEN

Prayer written for the Annual General Meeting of our Baptist Union at the recent Baptist Assembly by Phil Jump, Regional Minister Team Leader North Western Baptist Association

From the www. baptisttimes.co.uk

Recent stories and comment pieces on *The Baptist Times* website

> The groups who use our church buildings – are we interacting with them as much

as we can?

bit.ly/1mT54Qc

> A strategic move - John Rackley believes that Pentecost Sunday is not only about 'tongues of fire' - it is also a time to see the work of the Spirit in the world

bit.ly/1pFJ3ct

> Worshipping doubters:

Worshipping doubters are called to see God and humanity with very different eyes to the world, writes Joe Haward
bit.ly/1rLT1Ly

> Rehabilitation, rescue, preventing exploitation - Baptists are working on the ground in Moldova in the fight against human trafficking
bit.ly/1x83UHv

Preaching the 'offence of the cross'

A DAY-PREACHING conference is to take place at Guildford Baptist Church in Surrey next month.

Entitled 'Preaching the Offence of the Cross to our Culture', the conference will also see the official launch of a new book by Guildford senior pastor Ian Stackhouse.

Ian has co-edited *Text Message, the Centrality of Scripture in Preaching*, alongside Oliver Crisp, and said the conference will reflect on some of the themes of the book.

The keynote speaker is US Baptist pastor Dave Hansen, who in 35 years of full-time ministry has pastored churches in rural, urban and high crime settings.

Speaking ahead of the event Dave said, 'Squarely in the middle of the Good News stands the cross, a life-giving, polemical, theological symbol, necessary to truly Christian preaching.

'However, we live in a day in which the cross has become, for many inside and outside of the church, an inert, commonplace token.

'To preach it effectively today, we need to re-animate the scandal that it was in New Testament times.

'In so doing, we release its power to offend, save, renew, and realign our lives with the call of Christ.'

**The conference takes place on 19 July
For more information contact sara.sims@guildfordbaptist.org or telephone 01483 790252**

Horizons program live

AFTER several years in development, the Children's Leaders Training program for Horizons, the online training curriculum for the European Baptist Federation, has now gone live at www.ebforizons.com.

The training program is designed for children's ministry volunteers and leaders who would like to learn some foundational practical and theoretical courses on preparing or enhancing their work.

Horizons has been operational now for four years offering a 24

module course covering several vital aspects of ministry to youth and children work.

Horizons is an online, self directed, mentor encouraged training platform.

It is offered by a joint partnership of the European Baptist Federation with Canadian Baptists Ministries.

For more information contact horizons@ebf.org

Visit the site at www.ebforizons.com

NOTICE

Two hundred Baptist Praise and Worship Hymn Books (1992) are available from Farnham Baptist Church, Surrey. They are in very good condition and free on collection from GU9 7HA. Contact Andrew Binmore on aandj.binmore@uwclub.net

DEATH

SHAW, Joan, passed away peacefully on 24 May at Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice, Farnham, aged 89 and is now with Her Lord who she loved and faithfully served.

After the war she became the first secretary for Mission Aviation Fellowship at Mildmay in London. She then married the Revd Robert Shaw who she faithfully supported in the Lord's work all her life. They served in Baptist Churches at High Blantyre, Scotland (1950-1955), Rothesay, Scotland (1955-1964), Enogerra, Brisbane, Australia (1964-1969), Ward Road, Dundee, Scotland (1970-1978) and Biggleswade, England (1978-1985) and retired to Farnham in Surrey to live near their daughter and family.

She was a much-loved wife of Bob, who died in 2011, Mum to Brian and Anne, Gran to Rob and Katrina and friend to many. Her graciousness, cheerfulness, smile and caring nature will be missed by all. Thanksgiving service at Farnham Baptist Church, 3.15pm Wednesday 18 June. Faithful and trusting to the end.

BAPTISMS

Blenheim Baptist Church, Leeds: David Hart, Yuanlu Shi, Jin Chu, Will Allchorn +1 5
Bridgnorth Baptist Church, Shropshire: Mark Anderson 1
Streatham Baptist Church, London: James Barrick, Beth Lock, Jesse Yousaf 3
Wallingford Baptist Church, Oxfordshire: Temi Adenugba, Simon Jenkins, Lepani Vuinakelo, Dee Vuinakelo 4

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to phobson@baptist.org.uk