

# Welcoming Le Tour

CHURCHES around Yorkshire are gearing up to serve thousands of Tour de France spectators this weekend.

The first three stages of the Tour take place in the UK, beginning on Saturday with the “Grand Depart” in Leeds, and many Yorkshire Baptist Association churches have embraced one of the world’s iconic sporting events.

That first stage is a 120m route which takes in Ilkley and Skipton before ending in Harrogate, while the following day begins in York and ends in Sheffield. Monday is the final UK stage, with cyclists travelling from Cambridge to London.

Huddersfield is a Stage Two town, and Baptist churches there are busy.

Lockwood Baptist Church offers an ideal vantage point to watch the race, and is making the most of this with elevated viewing seats in front of the church. With spectators typically spending six hours by the roadside, the church is also offering facilities in its garden, including a bouncy castle, refreshments, and extra toilets. The race will shown be on a large screen inside, and after it has finished there will be a Songs of Praise in the upstairs sanctuary.

Also in Huddersfield is New North Road Baptist Church, which is running a French café to help get people in the mood, as well as offering respite from the busy town centre on Saturday



morning.

Hebden Bridge is another Stage Two town, and Hope Baptist Church has organised a large number of events, including a coffee morning with bacon butties on Saturday, and a Taize service in the evening. On the Sunday, when the Tour comes through the town, the church will be open again, offering tea and its facilities.

The spa town of Harrogate, featuring in both stages, is already full of yellow bicycles and bunting. Harrogate Baptist Church in Victoria Avenue plans to be open throughout Saturday and has a special service planned for

Sunday morning (9.30am).

‘Any Baptists who happen to be in the town over the weekend would be very welcome to pop in,’ said minister Alan Mair.

The Left Bank arts centre in Headingley has been getting into the spirit with a cycle-powered festival: it has screened three bike-related films with sound and projection powered by pedalling six static bikes. Simon Hall, minister at Revive Baptist Church in Leeds and part-time minister at Chapel Allerton Baptist Church, Leeds, is a trustee there. Chapel Allerton is also co-ordinating part of the hospitality at the Fan Zone at Scott Hall Fields.

Many churches and Christians of all denominations are involved in similar activities.

‘Le Tour is far more than a cycle race,’ said Wayne Clarke, minister at New North Road Baptist Church, ‘it’s a cultural event accompanied by a carnival procession up to eight miles long. It attracts people of all ages.

‘It also attracts massive media attention with eight helicopters filming at any given time. This presents churches with the challenges of road closures and local disruption, but presents enormous possibilities for reaching out to people.’

## “He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners”

Baptist Chaplain Sarah Harrison reports on a baptism at Oakhill Secure Training Centre



I STARTED my role as Chaplain of Oakhill Secure Training Centre (Milton Keynes) in December and have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It’s tough but very rewarding - especially when days like today happen.

A few weeks ago one of the ‘long term’ trainees (young offenders) came to me asking if he could commit his life to God. After a few discussions and some prayers this young person was following the LORD.

However, that wasn’t enough for him. After a few days he asked: ‘Sarah – are you sure I am fully converted now?’ ‘Yes,’ I say.

He then asked me what I did when I wanted to follow Jesus fully, so I said, ‘I was baptised.’ He followed up with the words:

‘I would like to do that.’

He said his mum had told him that when he was a baby he had been baptised, but he wasn’t aware of it. Now he wanted to do something to remember a moment when he committed his life to fully following Jesus.

He says he knows Jesus has forgiven him, that’s a strong reality. He says to me he has to live with what he has done, but knows that God is with him.

Today in front of just a few

trusted trainees this young man was baptised.

Not by full immersion in a pool, but full immersion with three jugs of water. You have to improvise in such circumstances.

God is certainly moving among some of the young people here. I cannot wait for the next one and the next one.

Please pray that our young offenders encounter Jesus and completely have their lives turned around.

## Concerns remain over Meriam

PRAYER continues to be requested for Meriam Ibrahim, the Sudanese woman acquitted last week on charges of apostasy.

We reported how Meriam had been re-arrested at Khartoum Airport and detained by the Sudanese National Intelligence Service over alleged irregularities with her travel documents.

Having been held since Tuesday, Meriam, husband

Daniel Wani and their children were subsequently released by the end of the week, but remain in Sudan.

There were reports this week that she faces a new trial relating to the documents she used to try and leave Sudan.

Meriam had spent eight months in prison, giving birth to her second child there. In an interview with CNN, she revealed that her child was born

with physical disabilities after she had given birth in chains.

The charity Christian Solidarity Worldwide continues to be ‘deeply concerned’ about her treatment. CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas added, ‘We call for the charges against Mrs Ibrahim and Mr Wani to be dropped and urge the Sudanese government to allow the family to leave the country unhindered.’

# Southend Baptist churches make covenant together

ELEVEN Baptist churches in the Southend area covenanted together as a network of churches on Sunday evening (29 June), writes **Andy Goodliff, Belle Vue Baptist Church minister.**

We are a dense group of Baptist churches in Southend - 14 Baptist churches in about 16 square miles! Eleven of us on Sunday felt ready to commit, with others journeying alongside for now. We hope this will be a positive sign of an intention to seek to partner together in mission, to gather together for worship and prayer, to support one another (beyond just ministers) and to participate in wider Baptist life.

This new partnership is not something new: there was a 'fellowship' of churches between 1946 and 1993 in this area, but it does indicate the rediscovery of a heart for partnership, network and associating.

We were partly helped in this direction by the work on networking done during the recent Baptist Futures process. The concept of networks needs to be given continued attention and encouragement among us independently minded Baptists.



On Sunday we met together at Avenue Baptist Church. We began with cakes – always good – and the opportunity to informally build new relationships or revive old ones.

It was followed by a more formal act of worship led by the Revd Andrew Picton (Avenue Baptist). As we took part in an act of confession, we recognised where we have failed to treat one another in ways that reflect the gospel. Confession was followed by celebrating the Lord's Supper, making real our shared communion in the body of Christ.

The evening ended with our act of covenant making; a set of words

that describe our intention to be more than independent churches. Each church was presented with a plaque with the words of the covenant on them to display in their buildings.

This is of course only the beginning. It has taken over three years to get here, and here is not our even destination.

Our goal now is to live out the promises we have made to gather as God's people, to participate in mission, to support those who lead and serve (beyond just ministers), and to engage together with life beyond us with regard to our Association, our Baptist Union and BMS World Mission.

## HEBA team leader moving on

KEITH Judson, the Regional Minister Team Leader of the Heart of England Baptist Association (HEBA), is to return to the local pastorate, he announced this week.

On Monday evening Bromsgrove Baptist Church issued a unanimous call for Keith to become its Associate Minister, working alongside Minister Paul Lewis.

This new position includes being released for two days a week to serve as Chaplain of Primrose (Day) Hospice in Bromsgrove. His role in the church will have a focus on spiritual formation, so 'all-in-all brings together the things I've longed to have more time for in ministry,' Keith said.

Keith has served at regional level for seven and a half years, which has been 'a huge privilege... a privilege I don't set down lightly.'

But the opportunity has come along at a point 'when everything seems to be going very well in HEBA, which is a good time to move on.'

And he and wife Jill believe 'this call is from the Lord, having tested things pretty thoroughly over the past couple of months.' Keith anticipates concluding his ministry with HEBA on 30 September. He requested prayer for the HEBA team, as well the Board of Trustees who will appoint his successor.

**PLEASE note the next Baptist Times Weekly Round-up will be 17 July**

# Catalyst Live discount

FANCY a day being inspired by world class Christian speakers? of the Jamaica Baptist Union, Karl Henlin.

Catalyst Live, an event for Christian thought leaders hosted by BMS World Mission, returns this autumn with



a range of speakers including renowned theologian Professor Miroslav Volf, former Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Sir John Houghton and former President

Until 11 July, *Baptist Times* readers can get a £5 discount (normally £29.95 including lunch) on their ticket for Sheffield on 23 October or Reading on 24 October.

**To book your ticket visit [bmscatalystlive.com](http://bmscatalystlive.com) and use the discount code BTonline.**

## Big Welcome extension

THE deadline for ordering Big Welcome resources has been extended. Orders can now be placed online until Friday 18 July for delivery in August.

A range of material is available, including prayer cards, invitations and other publicity material. See [www.baptist.org.uk/bigwelcome](http://www.baptist.org.uk/bigwelcome)

## DEATH

**CUTHBERTSON Dorothy** died peacefully on 19 June at Longroyds Care Home, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, aged 93. She was the wife of the late Revd Stuart Douglas (Bill) Cuthbertson and supported him in his ministry at Baptist churches in Marston Green Birmingham, Darlington, Blaby and Coseley. She was the much loved and loving mum of Rose and Andrew as well as of Susan, Jonathan and Penelope who passed away in childhood. Her lovely smile, graciousness, and caring nature will be missed by all.

A service of thanksgiving for her life will be held at Shepley Methodist Church, Lane Head Road, Shepley, West Yorkshire at 2.00pm on Friday, 4 July.

## BAPTISMS

- 57 West, Southend-on-Sea:** Lisa Kavanagh, David Stephens and Els Vermeulen . . . . . 3
- Christchurch Baptist Church, Hampshire:** Zoe Gatenby, Susan Wickson, Mary Holden . . . . . 3
- Maidstone Baptist Church, Kent:** Angie Clements, together with Louise Livingston and Joanne Ashby from Destiny Ministries, Vinters Park . . 3
- Tanterton Christian Fellowship, Preston, Lancashire:** Joanne Glass and Nick Davies . . . . . 2
- Upminster Baptist Church, Essex:** Charlotte Riley, Sam Bell . . . . . 2

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to [phobson@baptist.org.uk](mailto:phobson@baptist.org.uk)

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How do we remember God deeply in a world of distractions?

[bit.ly/VEPRv0](http://bit.ly/VEPRv0)

> An African Evangelist in Europe - Israel Olofinjana tells the extraordinary story of John Jea, likely founder of the first black majority church in the UK

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> Considering a multi-million pound building is a daunting, faith-filled challenge. A member of a Baptist church which went through the process has now set up a website to help.

[bit.ly/1mJZspt](http://bit.ly/1mJZspt)

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