



Update: February 2019

Dear Friends

Welcome to this month's Update full of news and resources for your church.

Registration for this year's Baptist Assembly in Telford is now open - please **book your place(s)** by 30 April. **The Assembly website has information about this year's two-day event** - including the outline programme, details of Saturday's '**Networking day**' and news about **this year's children's and youth programmes** being led by a team from Rising Brook Baptist Church. This year we have four ticket options available so you can come for the whole weekend, or join us for part of the Assembly, as suits your diary. Please have a look at the **Baptist Times article outlining this year's Assembly** and encourage your church members to join us - we'd love to see you there.

We also feature several new initiatives and resources for churches to use during Lent (beginning on 6 March). In particular, our Joint Public Issues Team has launched '**Living Lent**' - recognising that changing our climate is not just an activity, but a lifestyle. This Lent, the Team invites churches to respond to the call to climate action by making significant personal commitments to changing our lifestyles for the climate.

Stephen Keyworth
Faith and Society Team

This month's featured stories:



Helen Paynter explains the origins the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence



Firestarter events exploring Baptist church growth have been organised for 2019



Baptists in Bussage adopt a phone box and connect with their community

News:



Baptists Together Presidency Election

Having received two nominations for the President 2020-21, we are now engaging in an election process to discern our next President after Ken Benjamin. **Information about the candidates**, and details of how to participate and vote have been sent to all ministers and church secretaries (by email or post). Voting this year will primarily be online and will be **open until 31 March**.



Baptist Steering Group Meeting

The Baptist Steering Group (BSG) and All Team Leaders (ATLs) met at the end of January. Beginning with worship and prayer, the group considered the composition of BSG, heard from the Mission Forum, and discussed leadership and ministries development, the Baptist Assembly, the Baptists Together magazine and the Home Mission Appeal. Please share the **key messages from the meeting** with your church.



E A Payne Prize Essay

Submissions are invited of an historical essay, exploring and assessing the contribution of a woman or a group of women to Baptist life. The topic may include women who have served in ordained or non-ordained ministry in the churches. Length of essay is 6,000 words. Deadline is 31 December 2019. The winning essayist will receive £200 and the Editors retain the right to publish essays in the *Baptist Quarterly*. Submissions are to be sent to Stephen Copson on stephen.bhs@dsl.pipex.com

This month's featured resources:



February Prayer Diary

The **February Prayer Diary** is now available to download from our website. The particular themes for this month are:

- Baptist World Alliance day
- East Midland Baptist Association
- Student Sunday
- Support Services Team

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



Living Lent resource from JPIT

Living Lent is about recognising that changing our climate is not just an activity, but a lifestyle. We can buy a reusable coffee cup, but not ask who grew our coffee and how much they were paid, or we can refuse a plastic bag whilst buying fast fashion from a child sweatshop. This Lent, the Joint Public Issues Team is encouraging us to explore as a community, what it means to open ourselves up to whole-life change for the climate. **See the Living Lent website for details.**



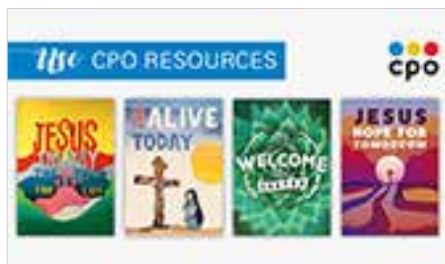
40 Stories of Hope - Lent from Hope Together

Hope Together's Lent book *40 Stories of HOPE* is a collection of 40 remarkable testimonies from prisoners, ex-prisoners and prison chaplains who speak powerfully about life-changing encounters with Jesus. Thousands of people used it in 2018 and found the prisoners' stories to be inspirational. If you didn't use *40 Stories of HOPE* last year – you can **order copies to use in Lent 2019**.



40 Acts

40 days, 40 reflections, 40 challenges to make a difference. Join forces with a global, generous community of over one hundred thousand people who have completed the 40acts challenge during Lent. Click here to [find out more and to sign up](#) for the 2019 Generosity Challenge.



Easter Resources from CPO

Easter is a great time to reach out to your community and invite them to experience church and ultimately develop their own relationship with God. CPO has a huge range of resources, from posters, banners and invites to colouring postcards, bookmarks and more, to help you invite and welcome people during this pivotal time in the Christian calendar. [Take a look at some of the latest resources.](#)



National Real Easter Egg Hunt

Easter Egg Hunts have recently grown in popularity with families. Most are run as secular events at historic attractions. The National Real Easter Egg Hunt is a way for churches to engage with this culture, have fun and share the Easter story. Resources are designed to engage people with the Easter story. Click here to [find out how to take part](#). The [Original](#), [Dark](#) and [Special Edition Eggs](#) are designed to be a personal gift for people of all ages and are available again this year.



Pray for your area in 2019

Jesus asked his disciples, 'Could you not watch with me even for one hour?' (Matthew 26:41). Use the booklet *How to Pray* to be creatively and strategically praying for your community. In this practical booklet, Dick Eastman, international president of Every Home for Christ, outlines 12 aspects of practical prayer and seven major spheres of influence to focus on as you pray for your community. Click here [to order from Hope Together](#).



Positive Church Publicity

A team of Christian graphic designers have produced an online resource called GOOD using many years' experience in the church and charity design and print sector. They offer off-the-shelf and customisable church publicity including posters, flyers, bookmarks, banners and downloadables as well as material for youth work & Bible-based colouring sheets for children's groups etc, and have just launched their designs for Easter 2019. [Click here to find out more.](#)



Visual Reflections

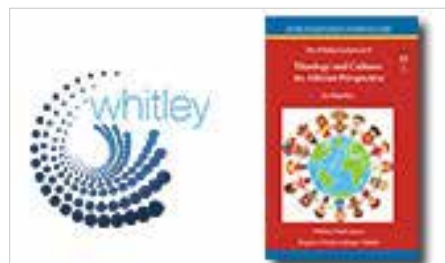
We regularly post visual reflections on our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts. These high quality images can be used for personal reflection and in churches, with our blessing. Click here to [find the current selection of images on our Flickr account](#).

This month's featured Baptists Together events:



Crucible Course - 9, 16 February and 9 March

The 'On the Edge' module is new to the course this year – an opportunity to explore the challenges and opportunities of marginality in church and culture and to help each other discern ways to respond in different contexts, urban and rural. It will run in Exeter on 16 February and in London on 9 February and 9 March. [More information is available](#) from the Crucible website or from Rachel Jay: rachel@urbanexpression.org.uk



Whitley Lecture - various dates: February, March and May

The Whitley Lecture was first established in 1949 in honour of WT Whitley (1861–1947), the Baptist minister and historian who was a key figure in the formation of the Baptist Historical Society in 1908. The 2019 Whitley Lecture will be given by Joe Kapolyo at various locations over the coming weeks - click here for [more information](#).



Relating to Sikhs and Sikhism - Saturday 16 February

Do you have Sikh neighbours, work with Sikhs, employ Sikh staff, live near a Sikh Gurdwara or have a curiosity about Sikh beliefs and practice? This introductory day at the Blackley Centre, West Yorkshire is for Christians, church groups and people of all faiths and none to become more informed and confident in relating to Sikhs and gurdwaras. Contact Andy Williams for booking and further details at andy.williams@blackleycentre.co.uk



Incarnate Houseparty - 5-7 March

The Incarnate Network's annual gathering provides a great opportunity to meet with others who seek to follow Jesus at the margins and experiment with what it means to live out the Gospel in new and challenging contexts. Again the Houseparty will be held at Somersal Cottages in Derbyshire, with prices from £139 including meals and accommodation in shared rooms. Single rooms available at a supplement. Click here for [more information and to book your place](#).



Firestarters - beginning 7-8 March

Following last year's eight events, a new series of Firestarter conversations have been scheduled for 2019. Firestarter conversations explore Baptist church growth - hear stories of growing Baptist churches, attend interactive seminars on factors influencing church growth, reflect and discuss your own church and its future growth. This year's events begin with London (7-8 March). [Click here for more details](#).



Crucible Taster Day - Saturday 16 March

Have you been considering taking part in the Crucible course? Six topics presented in two streams flowing over twelve Saturdays, all with opportunities for online learning and reflection on practice. Why not go along to this taster day at Didsbury Baptist Church in Manchester to find out more. Please contact Rachel Jay for more information: rachel@urbanexpression.org.uk



EBF Refugee Ministry Webinar - Thursday 21 March

Is your church involved in refugee ministry? This webinar will have contributions from Beth Gardiner-Smith (Safe Passage, UK), Frank Fornaçon (Pastor of the Baptist Church 'Kirche im Hof', Germany) and others and will aim to engage in joined up thinking to connect people, connect agencies and connect law. Click here for [details and to register to take part](#).



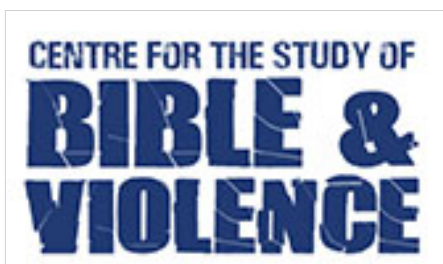
Baptist Assembly - Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 May

We are excited to be in Telford for Baptist Assembly this year and hope that the new look and feel to the event will encourage you to join us. With the local church being at the heart of this event, we are focussing on the our four key areas of work and hope that it will be a weekend where we can gather to connect, participate, learn and celebrate. With a varied programme and four different ticket options, we are sure there will be something for everyone. [Book your tickets now](#). We look forward to seeing you there.



Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence (applied workshop) - Tuesday 4 June

This launch event will take the form of a one-day workshop at Bristol Baptist College. There will be short papers for discussion and other round-table discussions in practically relevant matters relating to this broad area of violent scriptural texts or violent scriptural interpretations. The target audience for the workshop is ministers, social activists who are Christians, and interested others. [Click here for details and booking](#).



The Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence Academic Symposium - Monday 17 June

One of the aims of this new Centre is to promote postgraduate research in the broad field of Bible and violence; and conversation among scholars of different faiths, nationalities and disciplines who are working in related areas. The Centre is now inviting submissions for its launch symposium (academic arm). For this inaugural meeting, all scholarly research papers on the broad subject of Bible and Violence will be considered. Click here for [details of the symposium and information about submitting a paper](#).



The Peak Pilgrimage for Pastors - 5-8 September

The Peak Pilgrimage weekend is a chance for a bunch of pastors to get away into the big outdoors and enjoy the amazing beauty of the Peak District National Park over a 39 mile walk, with plenty of pauses along the way. It's also an opportunity to get to know fellow pastors better and will give you space to check out the direction of your spiritual life. To receive a publicity brochure and booking form, contact Nick Swanson at Whetstone Baptist Church on 0116 2863145 or at: revnickswanson@wbconline.org.uk

Other featured events:

DNA Taster Days - various dates, February - July

DNA is a Christian gap year with a difference - it's for any age! Let your discipleship be the doorway to your dreams of fruitfulness for God! Only changed lives change lives! UK or overseas placements are a possibility. See the DNA website to [find out about more and book in for a free taster day](#) in Bromley.



Youth Evangelism Conference - Saturday 23 Feb | Saturday 23 March

The Youth Evangelism Conference is a partnership of Christian youth organisations in the UK. YEC 2019 will give the stage to those born in this millennium to share what it feels like to hold out life to their peers. These are the voices YEC believes we cannot afford to ignore. If you're a youth leader, join the YEC South in Cambridge on 23 Feb or YEC North in Preston on 23 Mar. [Click here for details](#).



Becoming an Autism Friendly Church - various locations, 11-15 March

17% of the UK population live with additional needs... This free seminar, hosted by J John with pioneer Craig Johnson, is an opportunity to reflect and respond to this need. It is for church leaders, their teams, and all those who work or volunteer in children's ministry. [Click here for details of each location](#).



Re:Generate: Rural Ministries Regional Conferences - various dates

We don't believe God has finished with his church in the countryside – if you think your church has great potential to impact your community, but lacks the resources, then come to one of these Regional Conferences. The next one will be at Winchester Baptist Church on Saturday 23 March. Tickets £20. [For full details and booking for all dates and venues](#) see the Rural Ministries website.

