



Update: March 2019

Dear Friends

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

Baptist Union Council meets next week, and there will be a focus on ethical investments, encouraging women in ministry and the future composition of Baptist Steering Group. All involved would value your prayers. **Find your Council representative on our website.**

We are continuing to take bookings for the Baptist Assembly. Enabling the local church in mission is at the heart of our gathering this year, which has a different and longer format, and **we would love for you to consider being a part of it.**

As Lent begins, we are invited to make significant changes to our lifestyle for the climate by our Joint Public Issues Team as part of its **Living Lent initiative**. Find this, and other Lent and Easter information, in our resources section.

And as we mark Ash Wednesday, I offer this prayer from our Public Issues Enabler Beth Allison-Glenny:

*Holy God,
We thank you for your Son and through him our chance to become your children.
As we journey through Lent towards the cross, challenge us again to an uncomfortable holiness.
Drive us into the wilderness places of our world, to the places where there is no food, no power and no protection.
Show us your Spirit at work there, so we might partner with you in the call of the gospel and discover your faithfulness to us, even in the deserted place and especially in the shadow of the cross.
Have mercy upon us we pray,
Amen*

Stephen Keyworth
Faith and Society Team

This month's featured stories:



"Let's make our churches places where it's OK not to be OK"



300th anniversary of the Salter's Hall Debates among the dissenting community



God at work through Emmanuel Baptist Church - with Home Mission help

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 Union Council

Baptist Union Council will be meeting at Swanwick in Derbyshire from 13-14 March. Our Council meets twice a year and consists of some 80 members mostly drawn from churches, colleges and co-opted delegates along with Association and Specialist Teams. It helps to set the broad strategic direction of our Union. Please encourage your church to be praying for their meeting.



Joint Public Issues Team Internship 2019-2020

Each year there are opportunities to work with the Joint Public Issues Team for a year as an intern. Do you want to work as part of a team bringing about meaningful change in the world? Are you interested in making links between faith, policy and politics? This is a full-time internship for a year paid at the London Living Wage starting in September 2019 and is based in central London. Deadline for applications is 21 March. Please encourage people in your church with an interest in issues of justice and peace to apply. Click here for **full details of the internship**.

This month's featured resources:



March Prayer Diary

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

- Fairtrade fortnight
- Baptist Union Council
- West of England Baptist Association
- Combatting modern day slavery
- Mothering Sunday

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.](#)



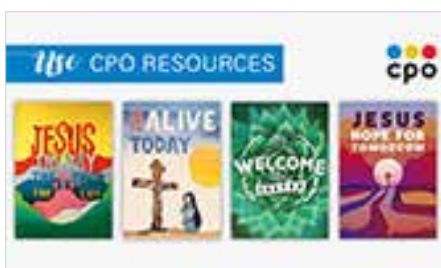
40 Stories of Hope - Lent from Hope Together

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.



Faith in Politics Podcasts

Faith in Politics podcasts feature JPIT Parliamentary Interns, Bethan Laughlin and Will Fremont-Barnes, interviewing public figures who straddle the world of faith and politics. Each month there is a new episode of the JPIT podcast - this month there is a special edition which includes news from Rachel Lampard about the Living Lent challenge, and a discussion of environmental news. [Click here to listen to the latest episodes.](#)



Visual Reflections

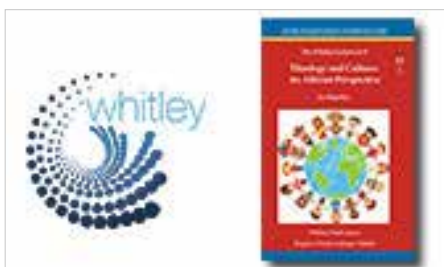
We regularly post visual reflections on our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts. These high quality images can be used for personal reflection and in churches, with our blessing. Click here to [find the current selection of images on our Flickr account](#).



New video: Baptism

As part of his sabbatical, Baptist minister Rob Hughes has created a video called Baptism, to show in baptismal services, preparation classes or even Bible study sessions on a related theme. To find out more, and to purchase the video, [click here](#). Watch a preview on [YouTube](#).

This month's featured Baptists Together events:



Whitley Lecture - various dates: 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](#).



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](#).



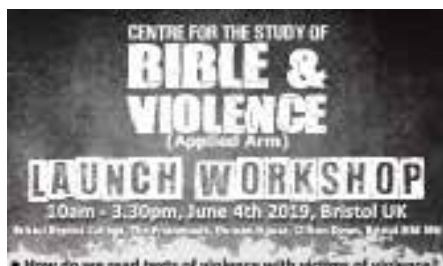
Firestarters - various dates

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. Upcoming events include Coventry (1-2 April), and Bristol (8-9 May) [Click here for more details](#).



Baptist Assembly - Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 May

Enabling the local church in mission is at the heart of Baptist Assembly this year and the varied programme will be focussing on our four key areas of work creating a weekend where we can gather to inspire, equip and connect. Whether you come for the whole event or just part, engage through the Network Day, the quiet spaces or the celebratory services, we are sure there will be something for everyone. [Book your tickets now](#). Closing date 30th April 2019. 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](#).



Sam Sharpe Lecture - 22 Oct (London) | 24 Oct (Birmingham)

We are delighted that this year's Sam Sharpe Lecture will be delivered by Professor Verene Shepherd (Professor of Social History at the University of the West Indies in Mona and Director of the University's Institute for Gender and Development Studies) on the theme of Reparations. Click here for [more information and book your free place](#).

Other featured events:

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.



Christian Aid Week - 12-18 May

This year, the Week focuses on Christian Aid's work in Sierra Leone, the world's most dangerous place to become a mum. Through the stories of Jebbeh Konneh and Tenneh Boweh we explore the precarious nature of health care and childbirth in Sierra Leone. There are many resources available to celebrate Christian Aid Week in your church and community including materials for church collections, worship resources including a 7 day devotional, Big Brekkie fundraising packs and campaign resources. [Click here to find out more.](#)



Germinate Lecture 2019 - Wednesday 15 May

Salt, Light and Feet of Clay: Celebrating the ministry of lay people is for anyone who is interested in the nature and exercise of leadership in the rural church. At King's Park conference centre, Northampton with speaker George Dunn - CEO, Tenant Farmers Association. [Click here for more information and to book.](#)



Faith and the Future of the Countryside - 23-27 September

This conference at Lee Abbey will explore the rapidly changing face of the countryside in England and the role that the Church can play in shaping it. Drawing on the experience and insights of the delegates, it will provide an opportunity to think together about a wide range of rural subjects, including the environment, agriculture and leisure. In addition there will be input designed to offer spiritual refreshment for the participants. [Click here for more information and booking.](#)

