



Update: April 2020

Dear Friends

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

Much has changed in our nation, communities and churches since we sent you our March Update - events have been cancelled and we are all adjusting to a new way of being church in these days of restrictions and uncertainty. Whilst many have been able to use new ways of keeping in touch online, we recognise that for others in our churches these technologies are not readily available and we need to consider how best to support them during these times of isolation.

If you have not already heard about them, could we encourage to you share our [prayer broadcast link](#) with those in your church who have access to our website? These are taking place on Wednesday and Sunday evenings at 7pm and are a great way of praying together as Baptists Together. Lynn Green has been leading these with other guests, and we'd love to have more churches joining in prayer at this time. Please use the link to our Prayer Broadcasts to join us live, or to use the recordings to pray later.

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

This month's featured stories:



'It's NOT virtual church - the people are real' - Haggate Baptist Church online

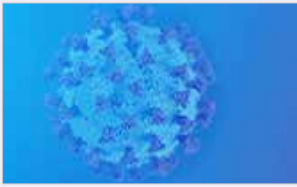


Churches around Cambridge encourage community to 'try praying'



Tackling anxiety and fear in the Coronavirus pandemic - advice from Louise Morse

News:



Coronavirus - advice for churches on our website

We want to keep you up-to-date with information and updates about Coronavirus so that you can take appropriate action. We have set up a [new coronavirus area of our website](#) with advice and guidance for churches and this is being updated daily with the latest information. Following the latest measures from the Government we have [updated our essential information](#).



Baptist Union Presidency Election

The election to discern our next President 2021-22 after Yinka Oyekan has now closed. Thank you to everyone who took part in this process, particularly as we are aware that the current circumstances have meant that churches may not have been able to discern together in quite the same ways as they would usually have done so. An announcement of the result will be made soon.



Joint Public Issues Team conference

On Saturday 7 March, JPIT's National Conference 'Renewal and Rebellion: Faith, Economy and Climate' took place in Derby. Over 300 people creatively explored our response to the climate crisis, and how the economy has a part to play in our impact on creation. [Resources from the day are now available](#) on the JPIT website and for those unable to be there on the day, you can catch up using the video and audio recordings. Why not take a look over the next few weeks?

This month's featured resources:



April Prayer Diary

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

- Eastern Baptist Association
- Easter
- Smaller churches
- Baptist Union Trustee Board

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

Our website contains a lot of information and guidance for churches as we all adjust to a 'new normal' during this coronavirus pandemic. Here we highlight some of the main topics available to you:



Easter Resources

We are aware that journeying together through Holy Week and our Easter celebrations this year will be somewhat different to usual. There is a lot of material available for churches, and we are collating [links to these resources](#) on our website. If you are planning something different or have come across some other resources you'd like to share with us, please get in touch with the Faith and Society Team at faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk.



Prayer and reflections

As churches are no longer able to gather together physically, we want to encourage and help people to pray. As well as our [prayer broadcasts](#) at 7pm on Wednesdays and Sundays, we also have a section on our website with [prayers and reflections](#) to help you through these difficult times.



Financial Support Scheme

Many member churches are already seeing an impact on their finances from the Coronavirus emergency, particularly those who rely on income from cash collections in services, room hire, nurseries or coffee shops. To ensure that churches are financially supported through the crisis, the trustees of the Baptist Union and Baptist Union Corporation have agreed a package of measures to support our churches. [Please see our website for details.](#)



The Guide for Churches as Employers

The last few weeks have seen enormous changes to the life of local church communities. Alongside many of the challenges church leaders face, we are aware that there are concerns regarding on-going operations of the church. [This new guide for employers](#) from our HR Specialist Team helps address some of the issues and helps you negotiate the Government's guidance.



Resources for Children, Young People and Families

Many organisations and churches are providing additional resources for families and churches to use at this time. We are compiling links to help you find out more about some of the [information and resources available](#). If you are aware of other valuable resources you'd like to share with us, please get in touch with the Faith and Society Team at faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk.



Guidance for Foodbanks

We are aware that a number of our churches host foodbanks or other services for vulnerable people. The Government guidelines state they may remain open as their work qualifies them as key workers caring for the vulnerable. Click here to [find out more about what this means in practice](#).



Tour of the Bible with Helen Paynter

The Revd Dr Helen Paynter, Tutor at Bristol Baptist College, is using her time at home to develop a daily vlog. She is taking a tour through the Bible and you are invited to join her. Each vlog is [hosted on our YouTube channel](#) and shared on social media.



Blessing from Jonathan Veira

Jonathan Veira has given his permission for this blessing from his new album to be used by churches during their streamed or pre-recorded services. [Click here to download the song](#). You may share it by email but please respect Jonathan's request not to share it on social media.



An offer from ChurchInsight for churches

To play their part in sharing their time and talents with churches, ChurchInsight is offering its website, app, and communication services to any church who needs them, and waiving their subscription fee until 31 October 2020, with full help and support *Terms Apply. There is no obligation to continue after the free period. This offer is for churches who do NOT already have a ChurchInsight account. Please take a **look at the ChurchInsight website for full details on this offer.**



An offer from iKnow Church

With the cancellation of all church services, iKnow Church is being provided at no cost to churches until 30 September 2020. Have a look at their website to **set up a free account** with the full functionality of iKnow Church. The iKnow Church team are also running a few webinars on how churches can use iKnow Church in light of COVID19 to continue church.



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:



Baptists Together Prayer Broadcasts - 7pm Wed/Sunday

Since the coronavirus restrictions came into force, we have been offering an online time of prayer led by our General Secretary Lynn Green and other guests. These are being held every Wednesday and Sunday evening at 7pm. **Please use the link www.baptist.org.uk/prayerbroadcasts** to publicise these prayer broadcasts to your church family. Previous broadcasts are also available to watch from the same page on our website.



Baptists Together Webinars - 1pm Tues/Wednesday

The last few weeks have seen enormous changes to the life of local church communities. We are therefore planning to offer some webinars each week which we hope will be helpful to you. These will be covering practical matters on Tuesdays at 1pm and more reflective topics on Wednesdays at 1pm. To find information about each one as it becomes available, please use the link **www.baptist.org.uk/coronawebinars**



Church Advice Webinar

This webinar on 31 March was led by Richard Wilson, Team Leader for our Support Services Specialist Team and Rachel Stone, Team Leader for our HR and Safeguarding Specialist Team. In it they answered questions about the new guide for employers and financial support scheme for churches. **A recording is available to watch again on our website.**



Growing the seed of the kingdom at a time of unrivalled anxiety and stress Webinar

In the first of our 'reflective' webinar series, Baptist Minister Shaun Lambert led this webinar on Wednesday 1 April. Looking at Jesus' parable of the seed and the sower and how to handle the worries of this life, the webinar aimed to help us to hold intense levels of stress and anxiety, rather than be held by them; and to help us bear spiritual fruit during such a time. **A recording is available to watch again.**



Bringing the Easter message of hope to the coronavirus world Webinar

Our President Ken Benjamin is hosting a seminar at 2pm on Thursday 2 April at to have a creative conversation about our Easter messages. **Details are available on his website.** It is hoped that this will be recorded and available to listen to afterwards, if you're not able to join Ken on Thursday.



Help end Modern Slavery in your community Webinar

The pandemic highlights the need for improved detection and protection for the most vulnerable and exploited in our communities and so *Together Free* is hosting a webinar by Zoom on Tuesday 7 April (10am-12) and Thursday 9 April (3-5pm). This will explore how to spot the signs of modern slavery within your community and how to respond. **Book your free place by emailing Dan Pratt on dan@togetherfree.org.uk** See also the **Baptist Times article for more information.**



Baptist Assembly - 8-10 May - cancelled

Due to the coronavirus we are sorry that the Baptist Assembly for May has been cancelled. We are currently examining options for an event in the Autumn. If you have booked places for the Assembly in May, you should have received your refund.



Baptist World Alliance Congress - 22-26 July - cancelled

Unfortunately, the BWA Congress in Rio de Janeiro has also been cancelled.