



Update: March 2020

Dear Friends

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

We hope that all our churches have been engaging prayerfully with the election process for our **Baptist Union President 2021-22** and will be meeting to discern who to vote for. We recognise that church members may not know the two candidates, and so we have filmed interviews which former President Rupert Lazar has made with each one. These are **now on our website** and we hope that they will help with the discernment process - along with other **information provided by the candidates** and the **article written by our Support Services Team Leader Richard Wilson**. **Voting needs to be completed by the end of this month.**

The Christianity.org.uk website has been refreshed and was officially launched last month. Founded by Churches Together in England, this website has been developed by the Christian Enquiry Agency and aims to tell people about Jesus Christ and Christianity. Have a look and consider putting it on your church webpage or passing it on to anyone who wants to know more about the Christian faith.

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

This month's featured stories:



Church, but not as you know it! - Church@StAnnes in Weston-super-Mare



Responding to the February floods - Baptist churches affected by flooding



Through the Storms: a manual for when life hurts - by Eric Gaudion

News:



Baptist Union Presidency Election

Having received two nominations for the President 2021-22, we are now engaging in an election process to discern our next President after Yinka Oyekan. [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 Assembly Networking Zone

The Networking Zone at this year's Baptist Assembly in Bournemouth will be a space that delegates will enjoy spending time in, looking around all the stands and learning more about the organisations present. If you are part of an organisation or group and would like to share what you're doing with our Baptist family, **have a look at what's on offer** and submit your Application Form by 13 April.



Coronavirus - advice for churches

At present the UK Chief Medical Officers place the risk posed by COVID-19 to the UK at moderate and the risk to individuals remains low. Currently Government advice is that individuals should follow good hygiene practices. We have published a [guidance statement for churches](#) in the 'Latest' section of our website, which we will update as further advice becomes available. Please continue to check the 'Latest' section of our website for any new guidance.

This month's featured resources:



March Prayer Diary

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

- Southern Counties Baptist Association
- Faith and Society Team
- Baptist Union Council
- Mothering Sunday
- Eastern Baptist Association

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



Faith in Politics Podcast

The latest episode is 'Bishops on the Benches' which explores the role of Bishops in the House of Lords. The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally talks of her experience in the House and how her previous role as the Chief Nursing Officer shapes her ministry and politics. [Click here to listen to the podcast](#).



Living Lent

Living Lent is about recognising that changing our climate is not just an activity, but a lifestyle. That's why this Lent, you are invited to become part of a community who will respond to the call to climate action by making significant personal commitments to changing our lifestyles for the climate. [Click here for details and sign up to take on the challenge](#).



VE Day 75

The 75th anniversary of VE Day on 8 May will provide our nation, and our friends around the world, with an opportunity to reflect on the enormous sacrifice, courage and determination of people from all walks of life who saw us through this dark and terrifying period. Those planning church services are encouraged to include the **words of the Tribute to the Millions** during their service and this can be downloaded from the **VEDay75 website**.



Free Bibles from Lord Wharton's Charity

Would you like free Bibles for the children and young people you work with? Then apply to Lord Wharton's charity. A very encouraging 1173 Bibles were given away last year and it is hoped a further 1000 will go in 2020. You can specify which translation you would like as part of the application process. **Please click here for more information.**



Webinar: Managing the Church Manse

Our Support Services Team offered a webinar last month to help Baptist church charity Trustees to consider how to buy, sell, rent and maintain a church manse that they own for their ministers. It also covered options for consideration in a pastoral vacancy, as well as how to provide housing in those circumstances where the church does not own a property. If you missed this webinar, you can **view the video on our website**.



Holy Week Graphics

For Easter this year, we have been creating a special Holy Week resource pack consisting of images that can be used on a church's social media accounts, notice boards or even their service slides. They can also be used on anyone's personal social media accounts as a tool to remind, reflect, teach and invite. **They can be found on our Flickr page** within the 'Yearly Resources' folder.



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:



Whitley Lectures - March - May

This year's lecture will be given by Robert Parkinson on the theme: *Finding A Friend: The Baptist Encounter With Judaism*. It will examine questions such as: Are Baptist churches sometimes guilty of unwitting anti-Judaism? What is the state of play for Baptist-Jewish relations? Drawing on the positive side of Baptist history and practice, it will offer guidelines for encouraging a greater regard for Judaism and a closer friendship with Jews. **Click here for the current dates and venues.**



JPIT National Conference - Saturday 7 March

JPIT's 2020 national conference in Derby ***Renewal and Rebellion: faith, economy and climate*** invites you to join in looking at the big challenges we all face – rethinking economic structures and taking radical steps towards climate justice, and how we can all act to change them – in faith, for people and for planet. Speakers include: Ed Miliband, MP and co-host of 'Reasons to be Cheerful' podcast, Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, and Ross Greer, Green MSP. [Click here to find out more.](#)



Money, Money, Money - Saturday 7 March

The Incarnate Network is hosting an interactive workshop in Birmingham on Funding Innovative Mission in the UK. During the day, Graham Doel from **Freeset** will help explore the idea of Social Enterprise and how it might be used to create sustainable funding for missional activity and Gareth Brown from the **Cinnamon Network** will give some practical pointers on how to go about fundraising. [Click here for details and booking.](#)



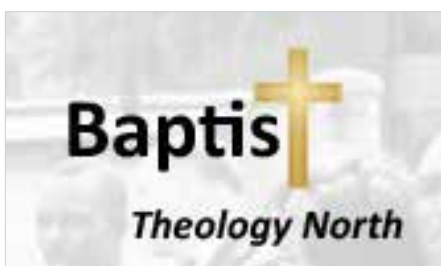
Crucible Course - March - April

The Crucible course is open to anyone interested in thinking afresh about discipleship, mission and church in a changing context. [Click here for more information or to book your place](#), or contact Rachel Jay: rachel@urbanexpression.org.uk



Inter Faith Day - Saturday 14 March

Easy First Steps... in meeting your neighbours of other faiths is open to anyone who is interested in discovering what we hold in common with our neighbours from across the faiths. Organised in partnership with the URC, it will be taking place in West Yorkshire on 14 March 2020. [For more information](#), see our website and email Carole to book your place on carole.sired@urc.org.uk



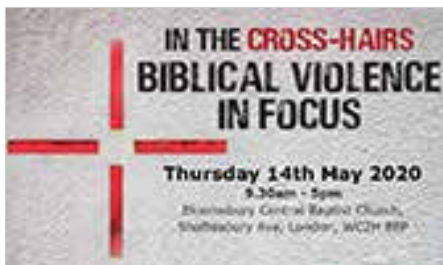
Baptist Theology North - Friday 20 March

This day at the Blackley Centre, on the theme of 'Action, spirituality and change' will include keynote speakers: the Revd Dr Ian Stackhouse addressing an active spirituality and the Revd Dr Clare McBeath on environmental theology ... plus short paper seminars from local Baptists. Contact Sally Nelson at sally.nelson@stchild.org for more details, to offer a paper, or to book.



Baptist Assembly - 8-10 May

We are looking forward to **Baptist Assembly in Bournemouth** this year. Like last year's Assembly, we will be including a 'Networking Day' on the Saturday which will be an opportunity to meet with other groups and organisations to share ideas and expertise. Will also be welcoming Shane Claiborne as our guest speaker for the weekend. We really hope you will be able to join us. [Booking for weekend tickets is now open, and tickets for individual days will be available soon!](#)



In the Cross-Hairs: Biblical Violence in Focus - Thursday 14 May

The second annual symposium of the [Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence](#) (CSBV) will be held at Bloomsbury Baptist Church in London. The keynote speaker will be Paul Copan, author of 'Did God Really Command Genocide?' and 'Is God a Moral Monster?' [Click here for details and to book your place.](#)



Living with Suffering and the Crucified God - Thurs 25 June

The [Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence](#) (CSBV) invites you to attend this workshop at Bristol Baptist College looking at how the Bible re-writes the story of divine violence to help us find our way through the challenges of human experience. It will be led by the Revd Dr Andy Angel - an Anglican priest in parish ministry in West Sussex and former Vice Principal of St John's College, Nottingham. [Click here for more information and booking.](#)



Sam Sharpe Lectures - 10 and 12 October

The Sam Sharpe lectures seek to broaden and advance the legacy of Sam Sharpe by exploring subjects in mission, race, class, and injustice. This year's lecture will be delivered in Birmingham by **Bishop Wilton Powell OBE**, Former National Presiding Bishop of the Church of God of Prophecy. [Click here for more details and to book your place.](#)



Incarnate Houseparty - 3-5 November

[The Incarnate Network](#) is a grassroots network of Jesus followers, who live and work at the margins, seeking to embody the Good News in creative and innovative ways. The annual gathering has been moved from the spring into the autumn. Further information will soon be available but for now, pop the date in your diary!

Other featured events:

Thy Kingdom Come Tour Events - March and April

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. This year it's taking place from 21-31 May. Free two-hour interactive workshops, called Inspire and Enable, are being offered to churches, giving an opportunity to find out more about how to get involved, and receive free sample resources. [Click here to find out more.](#)



World Day of Prayer - Friday 6 March

This year's World Day of Prayer takes place on 6 March on the theme '**Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk**'. Written by Christians in Zimbabwe, there are [resources available to download](#) from the World Day of Prayer website.



Rural Ministries Regional Conference - Saturday 7 March

Exponential: growing disciples by every believer through every opportunity. Many view the rural church as small and inconsequential but come and explore how exponential growth through a focus of making disciples who make disciples, who in turn make disciples, can be seen where you are. Through four interactive sessions we will see how we can positively impact those around us in our rural communities.

[Click here for full details and booking.](#)



New for May 2020 - BCYOUTH - 23-24 May

Join us for three days of worship, equipping and encounter at **Big Church Day Out** with thousands of young people from across the UK. Come together for four sessions over three mornings, then have your fix of festival fun in the afternoons; getting up-close-and-personal with some of the best artists in the world. Finally, as the rest of BCDO winds down for the night, you'll reunite as BCY for exclusive After Parties. Contact natalie@bigchurchdayout.com for more information.



The Passion - LAMPS production looking for venues

Can we help you to reach out to your community powerfully this Easter?

Co-written by Baptist minister Chris Matthewman, 'The Passion' is an inspiring and hugely accessible LAMPS production that has been touring with great success for the last three years to churches, cathedrals and schools in the UK - no venue too large or too small. The events leading up to the first Easter are recounted from the viewpoints of Simon Peter, Mary Magdalen and a Roman centurion named Marcus in this simply staged production which speaks with enormous power. For [more information and details on how to book a LAMPS show](#), please see their website or call Sam on 01235 543087 to see how it might work for you.

