



Update: May 2020

Dear Friends

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

We want to keep you up-to-date with information and **updates about Coronavirus** so that you can take appropriate action. We continue to monitor the advice being given by the Government and are aware that the situation may change once lockdown restrictions are eased. We will provide further guidance as soon as possible once anything changes for churches. Please check www.baptist.org.uk/corona for updates.

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. This Sunday will also include the **induction of our new President, Yinka Oyekan**, following the time of prayer - as he was due to have been welcomed at our Assembly this weekend.

You will be aware that this weekend marks the **75th anniversary of VE Day**, and we have **published a prayer** from Helen Paynter on our website to share with your church.

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

This month's featured stories:



Millfield Community Fridge - 'It has been a faith stretching decision'



What's age got to do with it? Empowering older people in every community



'The response was truly overwhelming' - an NHS nurse and Baptist member

News:



Prayer broadcast and Presidential Induction

Please encourage your church to join in our time of prayer every Wednesday and Sunday evening at 7pm using the link from www.baptist.org.uk/prayerbroadcasts Following on from our [time of prayer on Sunday 10 May](#) we will also be welcoming our **new President Yinka Oyekan**, praying for him and finding out about his hopes for his year as President. This induction was to have taken place during our Assembly, but we hope that even more will be able to join in online this year.



Presidency Election Result

Thank you to everyone who took part in the process to discern our next President for 2021-22. The outcome of this discernment is that Geoff Colmer, regional minister team leader of the Central Baptist Association, will serve as our President in 2021-2022. For [more information](#) please see the Baptist Times article on our website.



Baptist Union Council - March 2020

The outbreak of the Coronavirus meant that our meeting of the Baptist Union Council in March was cancelled. The decision was not taken lightly in the week before the meeting, but the subsequent announcement by the Government and the first implementation of lockdown proved that it had been a wise one. Council members were invited to participate via Survey Monkey for the items that were on the Agenda for discussion and discernment. [Click here for the outcomes](#)



Stand together at Pentecost

The Baptist World Alliance is encouraging Baptists to stand together this Pentecost, in worship, focus and giving. In a new video, General Secretary Elijah Brown encourages Baptists to 'join together in a movement of worldwide prayer, praise, and response that helps us stand together with a global church that is suffering.' Click here to [read more and watch the video](#).



Global Ceasefire

As you may know, all four of the denominations represented by our Joint Public Issues Team have spoken out in support of the campaign for a global ceasefire. Positive progress has been made on this, with public support at a UN and UK level. The work needed now is to get this to a tangible level, and enable increased support on the ground in conflict zones. Click here for [church leaders' statements](#).



Safe Passage Action

Refugees who have been given access to reunite with family in the UK - under the Dublin III reunification scheme - have had their flights cancelled due to Coronavirus. Priti Patel has expressed a reluctance to be proactive on this case, reinstating that it is the responsibility of the country of current residence to provide transport for the refugees. Our Joint Public Issues Team is asking supporters to write to their MPs to ask for the government to take responsibility in laying out a plan. [Click here to find out more](#).



Cancel the Debt

The Joint Public Issues Team has joined the call being made by Christian Aid and a number of other organisations for Global leaders to cancel debt for poorer countries in the light of Coronavirus. Some action has already been taken by the G20, IMF and World bank, but most often these are suspensions rather than full debt cancellations. This could result in further debt crises down the line. [Find out more information](#) here, and [sign the Christian Aid petition](#).



Internships / Gap Years for Young Adults

We have some opportunities for young adults in internship / gap year schemes.

Please pass on this information to anyone who may be interested in applying:

- **Inspiring Leadership** - a two-month gap programme seeks to encourage mainly Baptist young people of colour, to develop their leadership potential in Jamaica with the support of the Jamaica Baptist Union.
- **INVEST** - the chance to spend a year based with a missional context in the South West, exploring mission in creative and innovative ways - with outstanding support and training.
- **The LBA Leadership Year** - for young adults aged 18-25 years who are interested in exploring Baptist leadership within the diverse context of our capital city (email internship@londonbaptist.org.uk).
- **Explore Internships at The Well Sheffield** - a 9-month programme in Sheffield designed to raise missionary disciples in whatever context of life you're called to.

This month's featured resources:



May Prayer Diary

The **May Prayer Diary** is now available to download from our website.

The particular themes this month are:

- Farmers and agricultural communities
- Baptists Together President, Yinka Oyekan
- Christian Aid Week
- Thy Kingdom Come
- South West Baptist Association

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



VE Day Commemorations

As members of the public are no longer able to attend national and regional VE Day 75 commemorations or events due to the Covid-19 pandemic, The Royal British Legion is playing a central role in the delivery of a range of remote activity for people to participate in from home. This includes a VE Day 75 webcast, national moments of Remembrance and thanksgiving and a learning pack for young people.

[Click here for details](#). We have also published a **prayer written by Helen Paynter** (Bristol Baptist College) which can be shared.



Gathering up the Crumbs

This new collection of original worship material has been written, as part of the celebration of a centenary of Baptist women's ordination, by women who are accredited to serve in the churches of BUGB, BUS and BUW. It is a 300-page resource, brimming with ideas that can be used as they are, adapted for local context or simply used as a starting point for those wanting to write their own material. The material contained is a real gift to all who lead worship in our Baptist churches. Copies cost £15 and [can be ordered from our online shop](#)



Twelve Steps Towards Freedom

In this series, Baptist minister and former President, Dave Gregory helps us to explore how the path of the 'Twelve Step' programme might help us towards greater freedom for ourselves and for creation, which Jesus came to bring. These thought provoking blogs, written for Seventy-two, are about our climate emergency, and help keep the environment in our minds. [Click here to access the series of blogs](#).



Baptists Together Magazine - Summer 2020

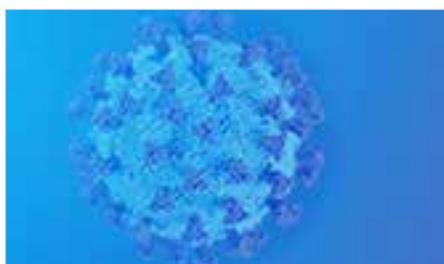
Work began on the Summer edition of our magazine in January, when we commissioned articles from and about young adults. This was in response to the challenge of reaching young adults aged 18-35 identified as one of six priorities by our Baptist Union Council in November 2018. This magazine has a great selection of inspiring articles which we hope will both encourage and challenge you at this time and we pray that you will be able to take time to reflect on them during these difficult days. As the Coronavirus restrictions came into force, we took the decision not to print copies at this time but you can **download your copy from our website**, and feel free to share it widely.

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:



Essential Guidance

We have collated some 'good practice guidelines' with the latest information and advice for churches. This includes guidance on legal issues for churches, advice for ministers, church treasurers, the new guide for employers, and information about safeguarding concerns. [Click here for this area of our website.](#)



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.



Easter to Pentecost

In this period from Easter to Pentecost we want to take time to walk with Jesus and to hear God's story revealed to us in different ways. A [new area of our website](#) helps us to journey with the risen Lord Jesus from resurrection through to Pentecost when we celebrate the giving of the Spirit of God to the world. We want to take time to receive the Lord's blessing of peace over us and to be present with Jesus so that we can learn something of our presence in this strange world.



Webinars

The last few weeks have seen enormous changes to the life of local church communities. Each week we are offering a webinar on a variety of topic areas which we hope will be helpful to you. [Click here for the latest information](#) on the forthcoming schedule, along with links to the live and recorded broadcasts - so if you miss a webinar, you can listen to the recording afterwards.



Discipleship in Challenging Times

During the Coronavirus pandemic, Peter Morden, Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Leeds is writing a weekly series of blogs for Seventy-two, to encourage us in our discipleship at this time. [Click here to access these weekly blogs.](#)



iSingPOP

iSingPop led the Children's programme at our Baptist Assembly in 2018 and 2019. They are inviting families to join in their brand new iSing Pop Show every Friday at 11.30am for a show packed full of energy, laughter and dancing. In **the first episode on 1 May**, they explored the wonders of the amazing word 'joy'. Please encourage families in your church to join in.



Albert and Social Distancing

During a period of self-isolation, Richard Littledale (minister of Newbury Baptist Church) wrote this delightful child-friendly book about social distancing. It's **free to download and share** with younger children and can be downloaded from Newbury Baptist Church's website. [Click here for more information about how Richard came to write it.](#)



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.**



Holy Habits Watch Party from BRF

The successful Holy Habits discipleship initiative has gone 'virtual' and BRF is offering groups and individuals the chance to join a live Holy Habits home group. Andrew Roberts is hosting eight sessions on Sharing Resources, one of the ten holy habits practised by the early church and, arguably, one of the most important habits to develop as we seek as Christians to make a difference in our current circumstances. [Click here to join the watch parties.](#)



Puzzling Questions - a free session

To help you, and those around you, explore some of the bigger questions in life, the Ugly Duckling Co has made the video for Session 5 of Puzzling Questions (Suffering) available to you, along with the discussion questions. They hope this will enable you to meet up virtually and discuss this relevant topic. [Click here to view the video and download the study questions.](#)



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](http://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 Wednesdays

The last few weeks have seen enormous changes to the life of local church communities. We are therefore offering some webinars each week which we hope will be helpful to you. These will be covering a range of practical and more reflective topics. To find the forthcoming schedule of topics, links to join the webinar and recordings of previous ones, please use the link www.baptist.org.uk/coronawebinars



24 hours with Spurgeon - 8-9 May

On Friday, join Lynn Green (at 11:00), Kang-San Tan (at 11:30) and other Christian leaders around the world as they take part in a first of its kind 24 hour sermon! Each participant will be reading never-before-heard works from preacher Charles H Spurgeon in Spurgeon's College's #24hourswithCharlesSpurgeon event. YOU can help by supporting the college through prayer, joining the event on Friday and donating if you can. [Join in this unique event here](#) from 09:00 on Friday.



Spurgeon's College - Virtual Open Day - 16 May

Ministerial/leadership training courses, Pastoral supervision course, Counselling courses, Lay training courses are just a few of the courses Spurgeon's College will be offering from September 2020. Whether we are in lockdown or not, the College will be running the courses online, face to face or a combination of the two depending on government guidance. Click here to [register for the Open Day](#) to find out more.