



Update: August 2021

Dear Friends

How often have you heard the comment that August is so much quieter with much less to do than at other times of the year and wonder why it doesn't feel like that AT ALL?! Every month brings new challenges and new paths to negotiate; sometimes it may seem there are so many paths converging at your door you are not sure which one to take. Our aim is to help and support you as you lean towards God's words spoken through Jeremiah, *Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.* (Jeremiah 6:16)

We hope that some of the resources highlighted below might help as you stand and look in the busyness of August 2021. Please do let us know how we might help, how we might listen well to you, with you and with your community.

August is a busy month, let's just name it as it is, and this August feels even busier as lockdown rules are lifted. This time of the year has always been busy for those living in rural areas as teams of farmers work late into the night in a narrow weather window to bring in the harvest. Jesus' many parables about farmers and their rhythms of life have so much to show us as we negotiate the paths set before us. Please do keep sharing with us what you have heard and seen so that we might together as one team, walk the good way, see the harvest in this season come to fruition and find rest for many souls.

May you know God's richest blessing and refreshment in unexpected ways this August.

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

This month's featured stories:



Missional listener Ben Lucas on how a baptism came about through listening and being

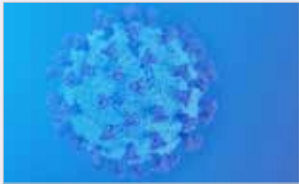


Churches encouraged to hold a 'Climate Sunday' and commit to effective action themselves before COP 26



Pioneer practice - a combination of seeing and building - three questions to get you started

News:



Coronavirus Guidance

On 19 July, the UK Government confirmed the move to step 4 of their Covid-19 recovery roadmap. This removes the vast majority of the previous legal requirements, but the Government recommends continuing caution. In the light of this, we recommend that it is both sensible and appropriate for churches to continue to take some measures to limit the spread of Covid-19. Churches have a responsibility to protect their staff, congregations, communities, and other users of their buildings. However, it is now down to each church to determine for itself what these measures should be. Our main guidance documents have been updated with suggestions of questions that churches should now consider and recommendations of best practice. We will then continue to monitor and review going forward for both England and Wales. [Please keep checking our website for the latest information.](#)



Baptist World Alliance Congress

Together, the 22nd Baptist World Congress happened online last month. Originally due to take place in Rio, Brazil, in July 2020, the Congress was postponed and then moved to be entirely online. Over 3,500 Baptists from 130 nations gathered to celebrate, learn, worship and pray together. [The Baptist World Alliance Youtube channel](#) has four sessions of the Congress available to watch in full. We have also highlighted [some parts of the sessions which may be of particular interest](#), on our website.



Baptists Together online shop

We've been making some changes to our online shop, and have recently added some new titles. In particular we'd like to highlight [Love:Work - a book of Reflections and Prayers for a World at Work](#) written by Regional Minister Phil Jump and retired minister John Weaver. We have also added three designs of [Marriage Acknowledgement cards](#) which enable Baptist churches to provide couples with a recognition of their marriage, whilst they await receipt of their official marriage certificate. As well as supporting Baptist authors, our excellent family-run fulfilment company, Verite, will be donating any profits from sales to Home Mission. [Click here to access our online shop.](#)



Applications open for communicators to support WCC 11th Assembly

The World Council of Churches (WCC) invites communicators from around the globe to be part of a professional online communication team to support the WCC 11th Assembly in 2022. They are looking for both young communicators between 18 and 30 years old and senior, more fully-fledged communicators to assist in covering the assembly through multiple WCC communication channels globally. **Deadline for applications is 15 August.** [Click here for details.](#)

This month's featured resources:



August Prayer Diary

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

- The Covid pandemic
- Students receiving exam results
- Eastern Baptist Association
- Joint Public Issues Team
- The West of England Baptist Network - Webnet

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



I Will Stand - Harvest resource from BMS World Mission

In the Middle East, North Africa and Asia, fearless Christians are stepping out in faith and living the gospel in hard places, no matter the cost. And this is why BMS World Mission is inviting your church to support them. With your support, BMS can send Bibles, equip isolated Christians to access Bible training, partner with church planters and pray for persecuted believers, and share stories that will inspire your whole congregation. [Click here to access the video and other resources](#) designed to help your church support Christians in hard places.



The Crucible Course

The Crucible course will continue online in the autumn. Two modules will be taught: 'After Christendom' and 'Church Unplugged'. Each will run weekly for 6 weeks (with a mid-module break) from early October. These modules will be offered on a 'pay-as-you-feel' basis to make them as accessible as possible. We are hoping also to facilitate some local 'learning hubs', where there are enough participants within reach of each other, and online 'communities of practice' (in partnership with Urban Life) to follow up each module.

[More details in the brochure](#) or at www.cruciblecourse.org.uk.

Any enquiries to admin@urbanexpression.org.uk



Godsend

The Godsend material, based on the wisdom of many practitioners over the past 20 to 30 years, is now available as a book at £5.99. Easy to read, Godsend starts with an 'Overview' that introduces you to the idea of finding one or more friends, and with them starting a new Christian community among people you know. The rest of the book uses real life examples to explore topics, with loads of stories, advice and frameworks to help you join a growing company of people who are bringing discipleship, mission and church together in their everyday lives. [Order now from our online shop](#).



Wonderful Youth 2021

Wonderful Youth is made up of four biblical sessions to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 16 to become 'the best that you can be'. Even though there is a vast number of resources on the Christian market to enable young people to reflect on their Christian faith, few intentionally enable Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic to see their image reflected in the resources. [Click here to access this year's resource](#), which features sessions on the first four Fruit of the Spirit identified in Galatians 5. The resource is particularly suitable for use during Black History Month, but can be used with your young people at any time. [The resources created for 2018 and 2019](#) are also available to download from our website.



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:



2021 Whitley Lecture - 23 August

This year's lecture will be delivered again by David McLachlan on the theme: *Does This Cross Have Disabled Access?* This lecture is being hosted by Whitley College in Australia and will begin at 09:00 BST. As churches increasingly seek to include people with disabilities, how disability fits into the gospel is a pressing question. Disability and sin often appear together in the Bible, which is awkward. Jesus' healing signs, as a foretaste of the saving power of the cross, only seem to make matters worse. The lecture asks whether the insights of people with disabilities might help here. [Click here for more information](#), and an introductory video from Darrell Jackson, of Whitley College.



Playtime National Conference - Saturday 25 September

At this year's Playtime National Conference, Care for the Family want to gather toddler group teams to reignite imagination and passion for toddler groups. The workshop 'Church & Toddler Groups: An Explosive Relationship' will be run by Andrew Ginn from the Baptists Together Children, Young People and Families Round Table. [Click here for more information and to book your place](#).



How to pull together a CMD audit - Wednesday 29 September

The Baptists Together CMD framework asks all ministers to conduct an annual CMD audit with a colleague of their choosing, ideally in the late autumn of each year. The purpose is to review how we have been practising the five CMD habits in the last twelve months and how we intend to do so in the coming twelve. [Click here for details and to join the webinar](#).



Thrive 2021 Conference - 8-9 October

Thrive encourages networking among the spouses of UK Baptist ministers at all stages of ministry or mission, from training through to retirement. The Thrive Conference takes place every two years, and is a great opportunity to take some time out from your normal routine, be refreshed spiritually and enjoy the company of fellow Baptist ministers' spouses. More [details will be available soon from the Thrive website](#) – or [join the Thrive mailing list to receive information](#) as soon as it is available.



Sam Sharpe Lecture 2021 - Thursday 21 October

Sam Sharpe was a Baptist deacon and enslaved person who played an important role in the 'Great Jamaican Slave Revolt' of 1831-2. Since its launch in May 2012, the Sam Sharpe Partners have hosted an annual lecture. This year, the Sam Sharpe Lectures in conjunction with House of Commons present this lecture being delivered online by Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, CEO of Christian Aid, on the theme 'Setting The Captives Free – forging the paths to freedom'. [Click here for more information and to register](#).



Discernment, dialogue and the Church Meeting: A way forward - Thursday 4 November

Hosted by [Project Violet](#) on Zoom, Prof Rachel Muers, University of Leeds will introduce the recent World Council of Churches work on discernment in the church. The Revd Ruth Moriarty will respond from a Baptist perspective, reflecting her research on church meetings. More details to follow.



Triologue 8th Annual Preachers' Conference - Saturday 13 November

This free conference via Zoom on the theme 'The Ecumenical Pulpit' promises to be an exciting event to discover how different church traditions prepare and deliver the Sunday sermon and what we can learn from another preaching tradition. This is truly an ecumenical event that will be given by our guest lecturer Dr Joe Aldred. **To register and to find out more about this conference** please email Samuel Thomas at sydenham_ntcog@hotmail.com



Satellites - 9-13 August 2022

Satellites is a new five-day summer gathering designed to inspire teenagers to live with God at the centre of their lives all year round. Organised by Youthscape, it's taking place at the East of England Arena in Peterborough, 9-13 August 2022. Tickets are already on sale - and there's a super saver ticket rate of just £85 as an incentive to book this far in advance. [Click here for more information.](#)