



Update: September 2021

Dear Friends

Welcome to September's update - a bumper crop of resources and reflections and ideas! We hope you and your church community are blessed by some of the things you find in this month's update.

As a Team we have been reflecting together on the life of Jesus as told in John's gospel. We were looking afresh at Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4), which begins with Jesus who was weary from his journey, sitting beside the well. Jesus was tired and thirsty and asked the woman for a drink of water - and then the talk began, the deep life-changing conversation.

Perhaps that's the way many good conversations start, being open to meeting each other's needs. I wonder where some of your most significant conversations have happened. Maybe not by a well, but perhaps sharing a meal that someone else has cooked or maybe drinking a coffee together. By asking for a drink of water, Jesus invites the woman into a radically different space opening the possibility of radical change.

Our prayer is that as you seek the deeper conversations, with God and with others, maybe one or two of the items we have shared here might help.

Our prayer is that you might meet Jesus who sits beside the well in the midday sun and you will know afresh what it is to drink the living water that wells up to eternal life.

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

This month's featured stories:



'The whole city has been devastated' - reflections and prayer points from a minister in Plymouth

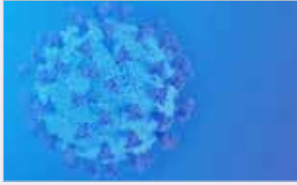


Help for the Post-Covid Church - a course to equip churches after lockdown - from Stephen Gaukroger



'Extraordinary glimpses into 17th century Baptist church life' - new from the Angus Library and Archive

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.](#)



Baptists Together magazine and Transform 59

The Autumn 2021 edition of our *Baptists Together* magazine, themed 'Order and Chaos', and *Transform 59*, will be sent to all our church secretaries, treasurers and ministers during the week commencing 6 September. Please look out for your copy! [Additional copies, including annual subscriptions, can be ordered from our online shop.](#)



Talking about disability, church and faith

We have just [launched a new area of our website](#) with articles and resources contributed by members of the Baptist Union Disability Justice Group, and others. The purpose of these posts is to help churches, pastors and anyone else who wants to think more deeply about disability from the point of view of Christian faith and church practice. Within this area is a range of discussion resources to share with a small group, along with testimonies, book reviews and theological papers. [Click here to access this section of our website.](#)

This month's featured resources:



September Prayer Diary

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

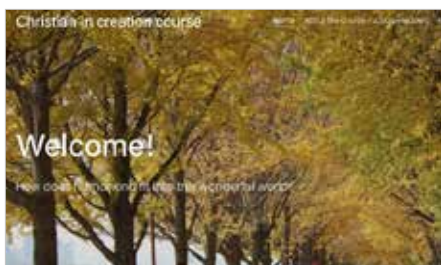
- Climate Sunday
- Education Sunday
- European Baptist Federation Council meeting
- Southern Counties Baptist Association

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



Season of Creation

Season of Creation runs from 1 September – 4 October. It's a time to focus on our relationship with God's creation through worship, and this year the run up to COP26 makes it even more apt. JPIT have teamed up with Eco Congregation Scotland and have worked together to build a hub of resources for churches to use during Season of Creation. From discussion questions to prayers and activity suggestions, [click here to explore their resources.](#)



The Christian in the created world

When Baptist minister Simon Bartlett couldn't find a suitable online course exploring a Christian response to creation care, he created one himself - and it was so well received a new series of sessions begin in September. The Creation Course is a ten week online course. [Simon explains more in this article in the Baptist Times.](#)



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.



Pumpkin Heroes™

It's time to get ready for autumn! Pumpkin Heroes is a [free pack](#) of Christian resources to help children aged 4-10 in your church group enjoy autumny, half-term, Halloween fun! [Get a pack for your church today from pumpkinheroes.com](#) Whether you run an action-packed Pumpkin Heroes event/party or simply let the children watch the brand-new Patch the Pumpkin Show, in church or online – all include fun-filled games, crafts, activities, Patch's Be Generous Challenge and of course, the new story and film, Patch the Pumpkin, Being Generous. LIMITED STOCK: Please don't miss out!



The Crucible Course

The Crucible course will continue online in the autumn. Two modules 'After Christendom' and 'Church Unplugged' 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 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



EQUIP is going online!

The free Equip Online Workshops are open to everyone aged 18-30 who has a heart to grow in faith, and a desire to see the Kingdom come in the world around them by exercising leadership in the life of their church or local community. The first year's content will be delivered over three online workshops happening throughout the year, starting on Saturday 18 September, with workshops two and three in January and April 2022. Is there anyone aged 18-30 in your church who is keen to keep growing as a Christian Leader, serving the Lord in and through your local church or organisation? [Click here for more information.](#)



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'. This resource enables young people to reflect on their Christian faith, and allows 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:



Deepening my life with God through spiritual direction - Wednesday 8 September

Spiritual direction is, for many, a key element in their ongoing formation as ministers. In this webinar, Nick Swanson, one of the ministry team at Whetstone Baptist Church and a spiritual director himself, will be talking about how spiritual direction gives us the resources from which we can minister to others. [Click here for details and to join the webinar.](#)



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. The theme of this, our first online Conference, is 'New Life' and our main speaker will be Chris Duffett, artist and evangelist. [Click here for more information](#). Registration forms for the conference can be obtained by emailing thrive.baptist.networks@gmail.com



Christian Resources Exhibition - 12-14 October

Two postponed exhibitions and 18 months later, CRE will be flinging wide the gates of Sandown Park to show you how dozens of organisations are responding to the new challenges of a changed world. Aware that some form of social distancing may still be necessary, the exhibition will be in the Esher Hall and Surrey Hall, allowing the creation of wider aisles in both halls and a possible one-way system. Other safety measures will depend on government stipulations at the time. Whatever the case, your safety will be a major focus. The organisers have offered readers of our Faith and Society Update a **free ticket** when you [click the link from this email](#).



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. [Click here for more details and to register](#).



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



Inter Faith Week - 14-21 November

The aims of Inter Faith Week, which is led by the Inter Faith Network, are to: strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels; increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; increase understanding between different people of religious and non-religious beliefs. The Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace. [Click here for this year's resources.](#)



Baptist Assembly - 14-15 May 2022

We are busy planning next year's Baptist Assembly in Bournemouth - please save the date, and plan to join us in person, or online. More details to follow.



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.](#)

Webinar recordings

Don't forget that you can catch up on all our webinar recordings which are available from our Resource Library. [Click here to find them.](#)