



Update: February 2024

Dear Friends

As we write to you in February I can hear the wind and rain against the window, with snow forecast and the threat of more challenging weather to come.

I wonder if this sometimes feels like the context in which you live, serve and minister? It can feel as though the storms come frequently and often unexpectedly, diverting us from the path we thought we were on and blowing us off course.

In these times we remember we are not alone. This mailing with its offer of resources and links, is our way of saying we are together in all we do and say. Together stepping out onto new paths in the midst of the storms. We know deep within our souls there is no path where God does not meet us. There is no storm too great for Jesus to overcome. There is no place or situation into which the Holy Spirit cannot breathe power and might, giving us the confidence to hang on in faith and trust.

As January slips into February, may you know the comfort of the One who speaks stillness over the wind and waves. May you know the peace of the One asleep in the boat even in the greatest storm. May you hear the voice of the One who promises to be with us to the ends of the earth on whatever path we find ourselves.

Every blessing

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

Feel free to forward this email to others in your church, or encourage them to sign up to receive our regular emails by completing the form at the bottom of every page of [our website](#).

This month's featured stories:



Baptist minister Dave Mann who founded a community association more than 25 years ago receives local award



Good News: a midweek outreach event for seniors at Clevedon Baptist Church in North Somerset



What might a Kingdom business look like? A blog exploring business at the heart of mission through the example of Lydia

News:



Praying Together

In addition to our monthly prayer broadcasts being led by Lynn Green and others, the Praying Together area of our website contains links to weekly prayer reflections from a variety of people, and links to other prayers. We encourage you to use these reflections and prayers in your personal and corporate times of prayer.

Click here to [find this area of our website](#).



Baptist Assembly 2024

'When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place!'

Registration for this year's Assembly in Telford from 17-19 May is now open. Baptist Assembly 2024 is over Pentecost weekend and will be a wonderful opportunity to be filled afresh with the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will dwell on the words of Acts 2 throughout and prayer will be central. Friends from across the Baptist family will be joining us for what is hoped to be a genuine, contemporary Pentecost for Baptists Together. Our General Secretary Lynn Green will be our Keynote Speaker - 'For me there is an expectation this will be a special and holy space and you won't want to miss out'. [Find out more on our website](#).



Project Violet

Project Violet is a three-year participatory research project that is examining the place of women in Baptist ministry. The aim of the project has been to understand more fully the theological, missional, and structural obstacles women ministers face in the Baptist community in England and Wales and identify ways forward. Its findings will be released in early May - and to help the Baptist community prepare, five weekly podcast episodes are being released this month - the first launched on Thursday, 1 February. Click here to [access the podcasts](#) and [find out more about Project Violet](#) on our website.



Supporting Ministers-in-Training

We would like to share a new initiative and would love you to be a part of it! The Baptist Union now has a partnership with Stewardship to enable Baptist ministers-in-training to receive financial support from friends, church members and churches. Those wishing to support Baptist ministers-in-training can make one-off or regular gifts, which can be gift aided if you are a UK taxpayer. We now have a [page on our website which profiles those ministers-in-training](#) who are partnered with Stewardship.



Key messages from our Core Leadership Team

Our Core Leadership Team (CLT) met at Yarnfield conference centre near Stone in Staffordshire, from 23-25 January. CLT valued the opportunity to be together for 48 hours to discuss our Financial Model Review (FMR), updates from Mission Forum and the Children, Young People and Families Roundtable, and other topics. [Click here to read a report of the meeting](#).



ACE Church Magazine Awards 2024

The Association for Church Editors is launching its next Awards to celebrate and recognise the work of church magazine editors and their editorial teams. The 2024 Awards are for any size paper magazine with colour printing. Closing date for entries is 2 April. Awards will be presented at ACE's Annual Meeting on Saturday 28 September at Westminster Central Hall. Click here [for more information](#).

This month's featured resources:

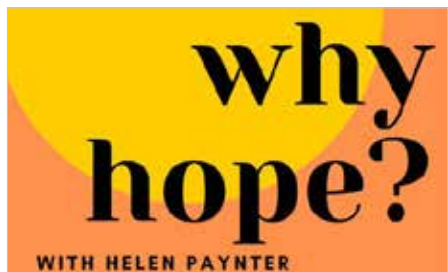


February Prayer Diary

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

- BMS World Mission Day of Prayer
- Racial Justice Sunday
- London Baptists
- World Day of Prayer

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



Why Hope?

In a world which seems to be spiralling more rapidly into chaos with every passing year, what grounds can there possibly be for hope? Can we avoid lapsing into sheer pessimism without falling into the traps of blithe denialism or saccharine platitudes? In this weekly series, Baptist minister and biblical scholar Helen Paynter takes viewers through some of the chief biblical reasons for hope. This is not a parade of inspirational Bible verses extracted from their context but a deep dive into the rich and foundational truths of God's word, embedded in the rich themes and life-giving narrative of Scripture.

Click here to [find the YouTube playlist for this series of videos](#).



Act on Poverty - Lent course for 2024

The Act on Poverty course is a brand new resource for small groups. It is being put together by JPIT, Christian Aid, Church Action on Poverty, the Trussell Trust and others. The aim is to enable your church to gain a deeper understanding of diverse experiences of poverty and enable you to act in the run up to the General Election. The six-week course is currently in production, including questions and prompts for small group discussion plus a pack of inspiring videos and recordings featuring conversations with activists and people experiencing poverty.

[Sign up to find out when the course becomes available](#).



Lent resources from Engage Worship

Engage Worship offers you resources for Lent, to help your church respond to Jesus' invitation "come to me and rest". In a culture addicted to rush and hurry, Jesus offers us a deeper, slower and more restorative path - creating space to encounter God in new ways.

- **The Rest Is Worship** - 40-day devotional book for individuals and home group discussion
- **Leaders' Resource ebook** - ideas to lead Sunday services and intentionally simplify your gatherings during Lent
- **Disrupting Worship podcast** – 10 interviews and discussion around themes of rest and worship.

[Click here to find out more](#).



Hosting a Hustings

Whilst we do not have a date for the next General Election, we know that one will be called this year. During the period before a General Election, churches and community organisations often organise election meetings (sometimes known as hustings) where members of the public can listen to and ask questions of the candidates who are standing for election. They do this as a public service, to support the democratic process, to facilitate public debate and as a contribution to the common good. This opportunity for respectful discussion in a neutral space is often appreciated by candidates as well as voters. Our Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) has developed some guidance to help churches organise safe and successful events which comply with the law. Click here to [download the guidance](#) to help you prepare.



Do you want to get your church passionate about mission?

The BMS World Mission Church Resource Newsletter is a great place to start. Whether you're after prayer points, videos or appeal resources, BMS have the perfect resources to suit your church and keep your hearts for mission alive. All their resources are copyright-free and free to download too! [Sign up to the Church Resource Newsletter](#) for easy access to the latest resources, straight to your inbox.



Table Talk for Students

The Ugly Duckling Co has launched the next in its Table Talk series. Table Talk for Students is a brilliant resource to equip young adults and those around them to have life changing conversations together. Open and supportive conversations provide students with a platform to talk about life, voice their opinions, ask questions, and share their unique perspectives. [Click here to order Table Talk for Students](#), and others in the series.

This month's featured events:



Praying Together Day of Prayer - Wednesday 7 February

There will be a live virtual prayer gathering from 10:30 - 11:00 when General Secretary Lynn Green will be joined by special guests to lead us in prayer and reflection. Please join in prayer at any time using the recording of the prayer gathering.

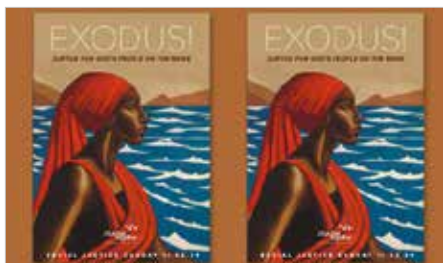
In this season of prayerful stillness and waiting, let's join together in prayer - please share this and encourage others to pray too, using the link: www.baptist.org.uk/prayingtogether



Book Launch - *Voicing New Questions for Baptist Identity* - Thursday 8 February

Join an online lunchtime seminar from the Centre for Baptist Studies to launch this new publication, edited by Eleasah P Louis and Andy Goodliff - with responses from Anthony Clarke and Lisa Kerry.

[Click here to register.](#)



Racial Justice Sunday - 11 February

The theme for this year's Racial Justice Sunday is 'Exodus: God's people on the Move'. It focuses on those who have been forced to leave homes and livelihoods for a variety of reasons, and the welcome they receive when they arrive in a new place. Click here to [download the resource booklet](#) from CTBI.



Book Panel - *The Sam Sharpe Lectures: History, Rebellion and Reform* - Thursday 22 February

Join an online lunchtime seminar from the Centre for Baptist Studies to launch this new publication, edited by E P Louis and Rosemarie Davidson - with responses from Gale Richards, Tim Judson and Anthony Reddie. [Click here to register](#).



Explore online - Thursday 29 February

Discover what parish nursing could offer to your local community by joining on Zoom for a free 1 hour session at 10am or 7pm hosted by Regional Nurse Coordinator Dawn Stephens. Find out what parish nursing is about and how it works. Just choose a time that is convenient for you then ask for the Zoom link at enquiries@parishnursing.org.uk



Welcome Conference - 8-9 March

Welcome Churches' vision is for every refugee and migrant to be welcomed by their local church. Bringing together Christians arriving and settling in the UK and the churches that are welcoming them, the Welcome Conference in Bedford is a unique opportunity to celebrate the incredible contributions that refugees, people seeking asylum and migrants make to their local communities. Click here [for details and to book your place](#).



Hope for Justice conference - Saturday 13 April

This day conference from the Racial Justice Advocacy Forum (RJAF) will focus on the critical issue of police and criminal justice reform/transformation within Britain, specifically from the perspective of racial justice. This meeting is your opportunity to share your views and vision for policing in Britain, as we journey toward the third decade of the 21st century. Your lived experience and insight will significantly contribute to the conference, making it a truly impactful and meaningful event.

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



Black Light Course - Starting 2 May

The Black Light course was developed 25 years ago by Les Isaac and Stuart Murray Williams to engage with contemporary concerns about racism and injustice. It explores the presence and contributions of black people in the Bible, in church history and in Britain today. It celebrates the remarkable growth of the church in Africa and the exciting 'reverse mission' impact on Europe. Running weekly from 2 May until the end of June - click here [for more information and to register](#).



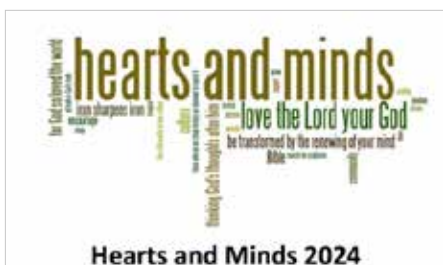
Baptist Assembly - 17-19 May

We're looking forward to welcoming you and your church to this year's Assembly, when we'll be 'All together in one place' over the Pentecost weekend in Telford. Registration is now open, with tickets available for the whole weekend, or part of it. **Book by the end of February for a special early bird discount giving 20% off the price of adult tickets** (tickets for under 18s are free). **Have a look at the Assembly website** for details of what's being planned, and book your place now!



Baptist Church: Back to the Future? - Friday 7 June

Baptist Theology North will take place in Huddersfield with the opportunity to hear presentations from two different perspectives on Baptist church life - from Paul Fiddes and Alex Harris. Cost £30, including lunch and refreshments. For more information, or to book a place, contact Sally Nelson at sally.nelson@stchild.org



Hearts and Minds Conference - Thursday 13 June

This theological conference mainly for Baptist ministers will be taking place at Bristol Baptist College and will be an opportunity to present and listen to papers within a friendly, supportive environment. The Keynote speaker will be the Revd Dr Peter Morden. Hearts and Minds is an annual day conference sponsored by Bristol Baptist College, Cardiff Baptist College, and Regent's Park College. It is designed to create a hospitable space for Baptists to think and talk about theology together. To offer a paper, contact Helen Paynter paynterh@bristol-baptist.ac.uk by 1 May and to register, email reception@bristol-baptist.ac.uk by 1 June.