



Update: April 2024

Dear Friends

As we embrace the sunshine and showers of April, the Team are busy getting ready for Baptist Assembly next month. We are excited to be able to meet all together in one place as a Baptist family, particularly as this year we get to do this over Pentecost weekend. Please do take time to **check out details of Assembly**.



The focus of Assembly is very much on the coming of the Holy Spirit as told by Luke in Acts 2. We are looking to embrace different ways of sharing the Good News of Jesus, just as Peter did that first Pentecost.

On Friday afternoon there will be space for deeper resourcing with five streams on offer. Come and join:

- Chris Duffett to learn something about art and evangelism
- the Everyone Everywhere session as we explore how God is leading us to be church right where we are
- BMS World Mission exploring the Road to Reconciliation
- Young Adults and Whole-life Discipleship, with Isabella Senior
- A workshop for people who are a Designated Person for Safeguarding.

Come and join us, come altogether in one place, come ready to be blessed and to bless each other.

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:



Bringing the community in Romford together to work as one so our young people can thrive and be safe



New Firestarters conversations for 2024 - enable churches rediscover a passion to help new people become Christians



A bridge of hope? The Baptist witness in Israel and Palestine - reflections to help fuel our prayers

News:



Council Report

Baptist Union council met at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, at the end of March. Click here to [read a report of the topics being discussed and the decisions made](#) during the meeting. Please be praying for those affected by these decisions.



Prayer Reflections

As part of our call to prayer, each Monday we are sharing short video prayer reflections led by some of our Regional Ministers and other invited speakers. This week's message comes from our General Secretary, Lynn Green. Click here to [access Lynn's reflection](#), and those shared previously.

This month's featured resources:



April Prayer Diary

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

- South Wales Baptist Association
- Support Services Specialist Team
- Baptist Union Environment Network
- Those called to a ministry of chaplaincy

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



'Your Faith, Your Online World'

The Baptist Union has been part of a collaboration producing this innovative project aimed at empowering young people aged 11-16 to explore what it means to be a Christian and how that interweaves with navigating life online. The project aims to facilitate a space for self-reflection, faith exploration, and thoughtful, faith aligning online engagement. Click here to [find out more about this free resource](#).



It's Not 'Just' a Parent and Toddler Group

The 'What About the Children?' Report 2023 found that 'over half of early years providers felt that children's personal, social and emotional development had fallen behind and almost half (45%) of parents reported negative impact on their child's social and emotional development and 20% felt their child's language and physical development was negatively affected.' In response, the Gather movement and Daniel's Den have published this new resource which highlights ways in which church-based parent and toddler groups play a vital role in helping to make children school-ready. [Click here to access this new free resource](#).

LET'S END POVERTY



Let's End Poverty

Could you bring a group of people together to talk about their hopes, dreams and challenges and the action they would like to see at the General Election, and share their voices with others? Find a useful toolkit on the Let's End Poverty website and once you've recorded your conversations, you can publish blogs, videos or audio clips (assistance is available). Help the voices of your neighbourhood to be heard more widely in this election year, so we can challenge all aspiring politicians to truly listen and commit to action to end poverty. Click here [to find out more on the Let's End Poverty website](#).



The Reading Room

Do you love books? Enjoy sharing what you have read? Do you belong to a book group? The Reading Room is a book group for Baptist women, celebrating three years of reading together and building relationships. They meet bi-monthly via Zoom for an hour on a Tuesday morning and have space for new members. For further information, please contact Charmaine Mhlanga on cmhlanga@hotmail.com

This month's featured events:



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.](#)

Act on Poverty



Act on Poverty webinar - Thursday 18 April

This online briefing and training session from 19:00-20:30 will help you plan and prepare to meet with Members of Parliament and Parliamentary candidates to discuss how to make UK and global poverty a priority ahead of the coming General Election. Get practical tips and ideas for holding successful meetings that can make a real difference and create positive change in our communities and our world.

[Click here to reserve your place.](#)

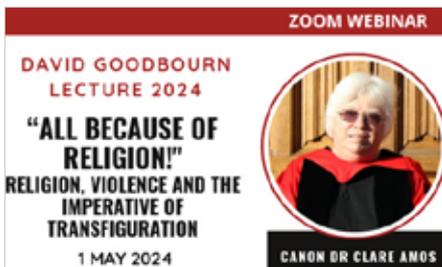
Paths of Peace



Mediation Skills for Interpersonal Conflicts
5 Session Course

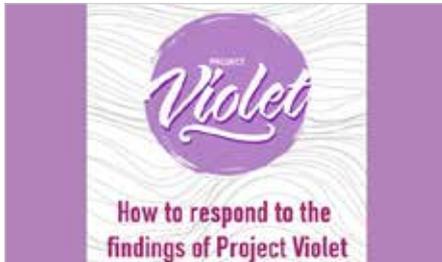
Paths of Peace – Mediation Skills for Interpersonal Conflicts - from Friday 26 April

What can you do when relationships become strained in your church or faith community? Do you want to help but are concerned about how – anxious not to make things worse? Baptist minister and mediation trainer Joanna Williams is hosting a five-session course for anyone interested in transforming conflicts in a church setting – and beyond. Click here [for more details, and to book.](#)



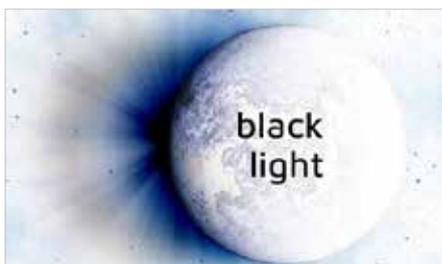
David Goodbourn Lecture - Wednesday 1 May

CTBI, in partnership with the Luther King Centre in Manchester, holds an annual lecture in memory of David Goodbourn who was a previous General Secretary of CTBI and President of the Luther King Centre. This year Canon Dr Clare Amos will be giving the lecture exploring issues of religion and violence which is very relevant in today's climate. It will be online - [click here to register](#).



Project Violet - sharing the results - Thursday 2 May

The findings from [Project Violet](#) will be released on 2 May. This significant piece of research began in 2021 and explores women's experiences in ministry. You are strongly encouraged to join the conversation and meet co-leads Jane Day and Helen Cameron as they help Baptists Together navigate the findings. Not to be missed! Click here to [register to join online](#) at 19:00 and hear the results firsthand.



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. This year our keynote speaker will be our General Secretary Lynn Green. Registration is now open, with tickets available for the whole weekend, or part of it. [Have a look at the Assembly website](#) for details of what's being planned, and book your place now!



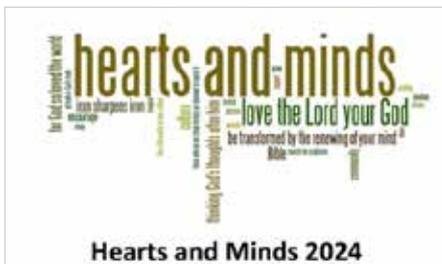
Explore online - Wednesday 22 May

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



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@sthild.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.



Fresh Streams Summer Theology School - 19-20 June

Ecclesiology Re-Imagined: Why do our churches operate and organise themselves as they do? In recent times our ecclesiology has come under the microscope like never before. At the 2024 Fresh Streams Theology School, some of our best theologians and practitioners will lead us to take a detailed look: What does the Bible say and history teach us? Should our structures be completely de-institutionalised and flexible? What is the Spirit saying? What about the future? Is there a Baptist way of being church that is sacrosanct to us?

[Click here to find out more and book your place.](#)



Cutting Edge 2024 Residential Conference - 24-26 June

The UK Church Administrators Network is offering this three-day conference in Northampton for Church Managers, Leaders and Senior Administrators. With the theme 'Serving with Love' it will include fellowship, teaching, equipping, resourcing and consider who we serve, the impact of serving with love in management and dive into learning some new skills through a range of seminars. [Click here for more information and booking.](#)



Christian Resources Exhibition 2024 - 9-10 October

Join hundreds of local church leaders and anyone involved in Christian work and ministry, at the Marshall Arena, Milton Keynes to find new ideas and resources, specialist advice and inspirational worship and teaching. More than 150 organisations will be waiting to meet you, offering everything from contactless card machines to customised keyboards, heating to seating. CRE provides you with a great context for networking and creative thinking - your one-stop shop for church supplies, resources and ideas. [Click here for more information.](#)



Thrive Conference - 18-20 October

Thrive is a network for those married to Baptist ministers in the UK - providing online prayer gatherings, local meet-ups, friendship and support. Their biennial weekend away will be taking place at High Leigh conference centre with speakers Barbara and Bill Carpenter, and worship led by Andrew and Jenny Fitzgerald. [Find out more on the Thrive website](#) and use this [booking form to book your place.](#)