



Update: May 2024

Dear Friends

Pentecost is only a few weeks away. I wonder, what are your expectations of this moment in the church calendar? I wonder, what are your hopes for this moment in the life of the church? What does Pentecost mean for you and your community? Does Pentecost resonate through our every day, for everyone, wherever we may be?

Sorry, too many questions to ask as April turns into May! Perhaps a better question would be, where and how are you seeing the Spirit of God move in your life today and through the life of your community, whether or not it's Pentecost Sunday?

As we gather for Baptist Assembly over Pentecost weekend, we come together in expectation, hoping to answer that question for our movement, for our churches and for ourselves.

At Assembly we seek the movement of the Spirit of the Holy God as we talk together, reflect together, worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit, together in one place. We are excited about the opportunity to hear again the story of the first outpouring of the Spirit into the lives of the disciples and consider how we too might reach people everywhere with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Do come and join us, come and say hello and let's step out together in expectation and joy.

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:



Looking back at the ministry of the Baptist Union Retreat Group - which offered room for a contemplative spirituality



Serving your community through lunches - Rob Stevenette explains more about the TLG Make Lunch tool



'We retain deep misgivings about the safety of the Rwanda Bill' - Churches have reiterated their opposition to the Bill

News:



Responding to the Findings of Project Violet

On 2 May 2024 the findings of Project Violet will be released. This major research project has sought 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. With requests for change addressed to its national structures, Regional Associations, Colleges and local churches, the findings seek changes across Baptist life. [Register here to join the Launch Webinar](#) taking place at 7pm and meet co-leads Jane Day and Helen Cameron as they help Baptists Together navigate the findings.



Baptist Assembly

It's not too late to book to join us at this year's Baptist Assembly in Telford as we delve into Pentecost through Acts 2 and take time to be 'All together in one place'. Our Keynote speaker this year is our General Secretary Lynn Green, who will be addressing Assembly on the Friday and Saturday evenings. Join us on Friday afternoon for a choice of five teaching streams. We also have a range of Bible study and seminar options available on Saturday, as well as the opportunity to join in the Baptists 'takeover' of the Telford parkrun. This year we have a variety of ticket options available for the whole weekend or part of it - book by 12 May (if you have young people in your group who would like to register for the children and youth programmes) or buy your ticket on the day. Click here [for more information about what's on offer, and to register](#).



Online Directory

We are aware that some ministers relied on the old Baptist Union Directory to keep informed of other ministers' whereabouts and details of local churches. For a number of reasons, we have not been able to produce a paper copy of the Directory since 2013; however, can we remind you that the [Online Directory](#) on our website provides as much information as we are able to provide within the rules of GDPR. It is regularly updated to ensure that the content is more up-to-date than was possible with a printed copy produced annually. Used in conjunction with our '[Church Finder](#)' you will be able to locate churches and their contact details through their website (where available).



JPIT - Looking for new Interns

The Joint Public Issues Team has two exciting new internship roles for young adults aged 21-30, starting in September. Do you know anyone interested in the intersection of faith, politics and justice, or wanting to learn valuable skills in communications, relationship building and advocacy? The two opportunities are:

- **Communications Support**, with a focus on communication, engagement and research
- **Constituency Action Network Support**, with a focus on the development of JPIT's Constituency Action Network, which enables and encourages the development of relationships between local churches and MPs

Please spread the word about these exciting opportunities noting the closing date for applications is 5 May 2024. Click here [for more information](#).



Could your church display a Let's End Poverty Banner?

Let's End Poverty supporting organisations, including the Joint Public Issues Team, have teamed up with Christian Aid and CAFOD to encourage churches to host banners displaying their support for action on poverty, wherever it exists, as part of the wider poverty campaign in the run up to the general election. JPIT is planning a media 'moment' demonstrating churches' support for change towards the end of May. Could you display your banner by then, and be part of a collective voice calling for our politicians to put the end of UK poverty high on their political agenda? Click here [for more information](#).



JPIT Youth Survey

In January the Joint Public Issues Team carried out a questionnaire asking young people in our churches what justice issues they cared about. The results received from young people, parents, youth workers and church leaders are available on the JPIT website and will be used to inform their developing work with young people. [Click here to read the results](#) and find out what issues young people in our churches actually care about. Perhaps it will help you as you listen to the voices of young people where you are.

This month's featured resources:

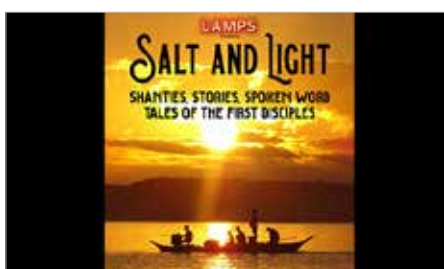


May Prayer Diary

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

- Our new President Steve Finamore being inducted at Assembly
- Thy Kingdom Come ecumenical prayer movement
- The Baptist Assembly in Telford
- The Northern Baptist Association

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



Be SALT AND LIGHT for your community this Autumn...

Christian theatre company The LAMPS Collective can help you reach out to people with the good news of the Gospel. Their fabulous outreach play *Salt and Light* is perfect for those asking the big questions: Who is this Jesus? What is he? And what might that mean for me and my life? Performances of the show are available to book for your church between 29 September and 6 October 2024. LAMPS bring lighting, sound, actors and technician - all you need to provide is a space and a warm welcome! Book before the end of May and enjoy a £50 discount off the full price of £990. Click here [for more information](#) or email bookings@lampscollective.com



Refugee Week 17-23 June 2024

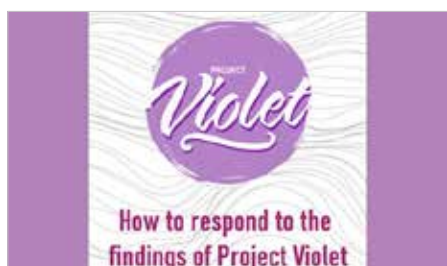
God's heart for refugees is a free resource from BRF Ministries. It is a week-long series of biblical reflections on God's heart for refugees and the Christian imperative to welcome the stranger, clothe the naked and feed the hungry. The call to love our neighbour lies at the very heart of the Christian faith and Jesus reminds us that the way we treat others, including the stranger, is the way we treat him (Matthew 25:34-46). It is available in print or as a PDF download, and is suitable for individual and group use. For more information and to order go to brfonline.org.uk and search 'God's Heart for Refugees'.

This month's featured events:



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](#).



BWA Webinar for Evangelists - Thursday 9 May

As part of their unified mission, the Baptist World Alliance will again observe May as Evangelism Emphasis Month in collaboration with other Christian World Communions. A special feature of the month will be an online webinar for evangelists which will explore evangelistic preaching during a post pandemic and technological era, and other topics. [Click here to register](#) and find out more.



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!



Love, Pray, Vote launch webinar - Tuesday 21 May

Join the Joint Public Issues Team to explore how individuals and churches can engage in the upcoming UK general election. As the election draws near, JPIT has curated valuable resources to aid you in preparation and engagement. From voter registration and ID requirements to issues briefings and theological resources, learn how individuals and churches can play a vital role in political discourse. [Click here to register to join in](#) for an insightful exploration into political engagement and the upcoming general election.



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



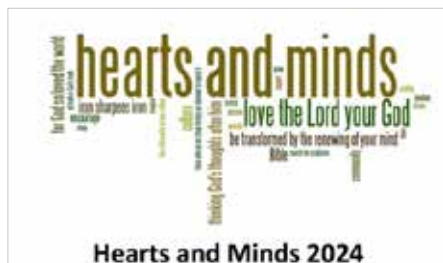
Baptist Church: Back to the Future? - Friday 7 June

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



Dignity for All: Let's End Poverty conference - Saturday 8 June

Join the Joint Public Issues Team in York for a day filled with discussions, inspiring speakers, and collaborative workshops. It's a gathering for anyone working to reclaim dignity, agency and power. It's led by the real experts – people with personal experience of the issues. Together, we are building a powerful movement for change. We can make poverty a priority in the General Election – and make the voices of people in poverty heard. Click here [for more information and to register](#).



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](#).