



Update: August 2024

Dear Friends

We have arrived at summer! Maybe even some welcome sunshine lies ahead of us this August. We are aware this is a busy time for so many churches as you share God's love with your community. Holiday clubs for children and 'holiday of home' for those who are unable to go away are amongst some of the things we know you will be focused on. We are praying for you as you seek to bless this summer and we hope you are able to find some valuable time of refreshment in the midst of the busyness.

This summer might also feel a little different. There is disquiet in our communities. We might taste fear lurking as we read the national news, follow local Facebook groups and other social media, as we talk with our community. Fear comes in all guises and takes root as the disruptor of communities. Fear brings disruption and pain and we have seen this worked out in the riots in our towns and cities; fear turns gentleness to shouting and destruction.

And yet.... There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:18-19

John has so much to say about love in his letter to the early Church, it is difficult to pick one small passage! The message of Jesus is indeed so radically different to the shouting and fear we see and feel in our communities; what a privilege we have to hold and offer this for others. We believe and have come to know that God's love changes everything and we have the privilege of praying for peace to replace fear and for love to overcome all fear. This summer we stand together in prayer and in love. We pray that all will know the peace that passes understanding as we bow our knee before the One who is love.

We have no doubt there will be many stories of churches loving and bringing peace, please do share these with us. Our President, **Steve Finamore**, offers us a reflection on the riots and our churches' responses, **which can be found [here](#)**, together with a prayer for us to use more widely. You will also find a statement from the Presidents of Churches Together in England on this webpage.

This summer may God bless you with peace and a deeper knowledge of the love revealed in Christ.

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:



The Christian, embodiment and mindfulness: Why our bodies are central to our spiritual life and wellbeing - by Shaun Lambert



Did you write a letter to Peru in 1993 in support of a Christian falsely arrested? Juan wants to say thank you!



Proximity, a brand-new, free resource hub for anyone working in urban ministry and mission, has launched

News:



Chris Duffett's Baptist Assembly paintings to support Home Mission

At this year's Baptist Assembly, Baptist Minister and Artist Chris Duffett created two paintings as he listened to God during the evening worship on Friday and Saturday. The originals are now being offered for sale via a sealed bids auction. All proceeds will go to Home Mission. Click [here to find out more about the paintings and how you can bid](#). **Deadline for receipt of bids is the end of August.**



Post-election Action Points

The first few months for a new MP can be challenging as they get established. Whether your MP is new or returning to the role, the Joint Public Issues Team is inviting all churches to let your MP know that you care, you are praying for them and you would like to support them as they seek to serve the local community. Even if they aren't the candidate you voted for, will you show that your church cares? Click below for some suggestions for how you could do it.

- **Send your MP a card**
- **Invite Your MP to church**
- **Join a Constituency Action Network webinar** on 29 August (19:30) or 4 September (12:30) to help your church build a meaningful relationship with your MP

If you engage with your new MP in this way, JPIT would love to hear from you with feedback. Please send your reflections to JPIT via email to hello@jpit.org



Give your Feedback on General Election Resources

During the General Election period, the Joint Public Issues Team offered a pack of resources around the theme of 'Love, Pray, Vote'. They are now collecting feedback and responses to help them with future work. If you used any of the resources, it would be really helpful if you could **complete this short form by Friday 16 August**. If you didn't use the resources, please say why and help them improve their work.



Chair of the Strategy and Policy Group of the Joint Public Issues Team

Could you bring your chairing skills and ecumenical experience to help facilitate the church's social justice, policy and political work? The Joint Public Issues Team - a partnership between the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches - is now searching for a Chair of the Strategy and Policy Group which oversees the team's work, and facilitates the working together of the denominations to achieve JPIT's purposes. If you are interested in this voluntary unpaid position, [click here to find out more and apply](#).

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:

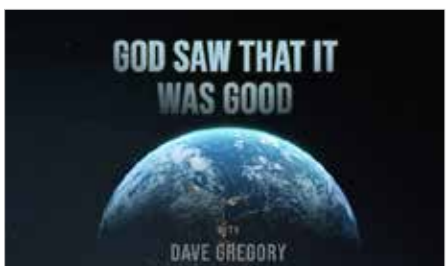
- The work of the Joint Public Issues Team
- The work of our ecumenical instruments: CTE, Cytûn and CTBI
- The Eastern Baptist Association
- Our Baptist Colleges preparing women and men for leadership

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



Season of Creation

Creationtide, Creation Time or the Season of Creation is the name given to the period from 1 September to 4 October each year. During this time, churches are encouraged to have a focus on creation, with all the joys and responsibilities that being part of God's creation brings to us. The Joint Public Issues Team has produced [a collection of resources to help you and your church](#) engage with the Season of Creation this year. This year's theme is To hope and act with Creation.



'God Saw That It Was Good'

This series of films with Dave Gregory weaves stunning visual imagery with a narrative entwining science and faith, taking people deeper in the wonder, mystery and meaning of the world. Looking in fresh ways at our rich, full, and yet fragile world. The films are a collaboration between the [Baptist Union Environment Network](#) (BUEN) and Fuelcast Media, funded by a grant from Scientists in Congregations. They can be used alongside a downloadable resource with large and small groups of people who want to explore and understand God's invitation to share in caring for creation. Click here [to access the films and resource guide](#).



Politics in the Pulpit

Politics in the Pulpit is JPIT's lectionary-based weekly preaching resource, with guests discussing the political dimensions present in the Bible readings being explored by many churches the following Sunday, and reflecting on how they connect with the week's current news and our calling to be justice seekers. The current podcast host is Helen Paynter from the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence at Bristol Baptist College and episodes are released on Tuesday mornings. Click here to [access this week's episode and previous podcasts](#).



Education Sunday 2024

What is your church or Churches Together group doing on Sunday 8 September to mark this national day of prayer and celebration for everyone in the world of education? Education Sunday is a special Sunday on which churches across England and Wales pray for all those who work in education, and pray for all those who learn. It has been celebrated for over 100 years. [Find out more, including resources on this year's theme](#) *Learning together: education in our community* on the CTE website.

This month's featured events:



Constituency Action Network Webinar - 29 August or 4 September

The Joint Public Issues Team is creating a network of congregations that are committed to developing a meaningful relationship with their MP. Join a webinar where JPIT will explain what the Constituency Action Network (CAN) is for and how your congregation can be empowered. Each introductory webinar has the same content and is aimed at church leaders or other people in your congregations who are interested in developing a meaningful relationship with your MP. Click here to:

- [register for the webinar on Thursday 29 August at 19:30](#)
- [register for the webinar on Wednesday 4 September at 12:30](#)



Explore online - Thursday 5 September

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



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](#).



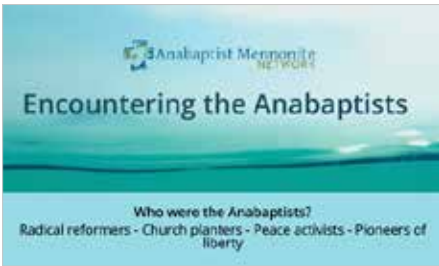
Sam Sharpe Lecture - Thursday 24 October

The Sam Sharpe lectures seek to broaden and advance the legacy of Sam Sharpe by exploring subjects in mission, race, class, and injustice. This year's Lecture will be delivered by the Revd Dr Carlton Turner on the theme: *'Fighting for Freedom, Fighting for Wholeness: Revolutionary Reactions to Colonial Christianity'*. Join the Lecture at The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham, or link to the livestream. [Registration is now open](#) - including the option to meet before the Lecture to share a Caribbean meal.



Dissent in a digital age - Thursday 7 November

The Centre for Baptist Studies is hosting this day-conference on Digital Theology at Regent's Park College. They have eight excellent speakers lined up and it promises to be a fascinating day exploring topics as diverse as 'Human Says No', 'Theology of Play', 'AI and the Church', 'Worldviews of Dissent' and much more. Registration is free (and includes lunch). [Click here to sign up](#) or [visit the College website for more details](#).



Encountering the Anabaptists - Thursday 7, 14, 21 and 28 November

In 2025, many people will be marking the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Anabaptist movement and asking what contemporary significance its vision and practices have for followers of Jesus today. This short course is an opportunity in the weeks leading up to 2025 to learn something about the history and distinctive convictions and practices of this radical movement. The course fee of £20 includes a free copy of *The Naked Anabaptist* or, if participants already have this book, of *The New Anabaptists* (published in January 2024).

[Click here to sign up](#).



Theology Live - 25 January 2025

This day conference at Bloomsbury Baptist Church is for Baptists to explore theology together, with specialist input and time for discussion. There are many Baptists engaged in theological and biblical research, and this day-event brings them together to share their thinking, fostering a community of research amongst British Baptists. The day will comprise a series of short papers, reflecting the diversity of current Baptist theological engagement, with opportunities to interact with speakers. [Click here to find out more and book your place](#).