



Update: September 2024

Dear Friends

Over the summer we have been reflecting on the struggles of those whose voices are often not heard and whose lives are frequently overlooked by some in our communities. So often the exhortation throughout God's word is to show kindness and mercy, not to oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien or the poor (Zechariah 7:10). Jesus sees, speaks to, heals and shows loving mercy to many who were marginalised and rejected by their community. And so we have been asking ourselves, how might this affect our work, how might we respond to each other and to those in our communities? How can we point to the loving kindness of God who sees and hears all?

Later this week the *Baptists Together* magazine will land in print and online, hurrah! In it you will find stories of Baptists who are seeking to answer these questions. As a Team we are thinking about Assembly in 2025 and the question of how we might help each other to bring the Gospel of salvation to all is foremost in our planning. Watch out for more information coming very shortly!

Our prayers continue for you all as you lead and serve across Baptists Together. May you know God's loving kindness in all you bring to the spaces where God has called you. Our hope is that we are able to help and support you in all your endeavours to bring the Good News of God's loving mercy to those around you.

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:



'An oasis of calm in such a busy environment' - a new airside prayer room has opened at East Midlands Airport



Faith in Art: An Evening with the Artists - Art exhibition in Southend celebrates connection between faith and creativity



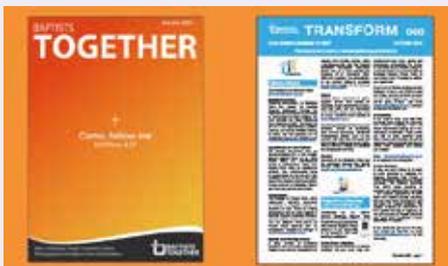
'As churches, we remind people of the greatest act' - an ecumenical service at a traditional English circus

News:



Project Violet - findings

Responses are already coming in with commitments to action that will be reported to Baptist Union Council in October - and **local churches and other stakeholders in Baptist life have until 30 September to respond to the project's findings**. 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. The **reports from each of the co-researchers** involved in the Project are available to download from our website, along with helpful graphic recordings which highlight key aspects of each report. In addition, have a look at the **Local Church Report** and the '**requests for change**' across all aspects of Baptist life - are there conversations you could have in your church to address some of the findings? **[Click here for an update in the Baptist Times.](#)**



Baptists Together magazine and Transform 68

All our ministers, church secretaries and treasurers will soon be receiving their copy of the Autumn 2024 edition of our *Baptists Together* magazine. *Come, follow me* explores the theme of discipleship and we hope you find much to interest and inform as you seek to follow Jesus and respond to his call. Please look out for your copy, and share the articles with your church. The **individual articles are also available** from our website and **additional copies are available to order** from our online shop.

Please be aware that the latest *Transform*, with helpful information for treasurers and secretaries, is in an online-only format this time and can be accessed from **baptist.org.uk/transform68**.



Home Mission

Communities around our nation are being transformed by Home Mission through grants to churches and regions, which facilitate church planting, the resourcing of local churches and enable churches to develop new and creative mission projects. You can **[read about how Home Mission Grants are supporting churches and missional projects](#)** on our website.

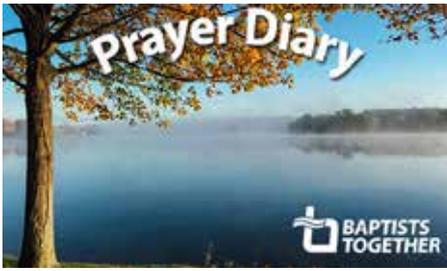
Southern Counties Baptist Association has recently produced some videos outlining some of the ways Home Mission supports churches and communities in SCBA - **[click here to watch](#)** and share with your church.



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:



September Prayer Diary

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

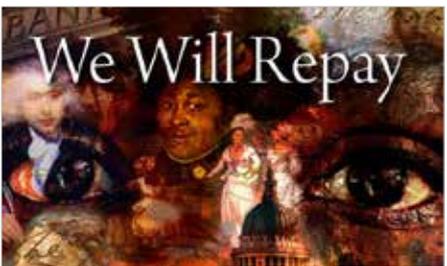
- The Season of Creation
- Education Sunday
- The Core Leadership Team and Trustees meeting this week
- Disability Awareness Week
- The North Western Baptist Association

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



Small Group Resources from JPIT

Are you looking for a short course for the Autumn to do individually or as a group? Do you want something that will challenge and inspire you as you learn? The Joint Public Issues Team has a range of fantastic resources for small groups, including Just Economics, Act on Poverty, How Does Change Happen? and more. All the courses have complete session plans, accompanying resources such as videos, activities, questions and prayers, making running these courses as easy for you as possible. Click here [to find out more and download the courses](#).



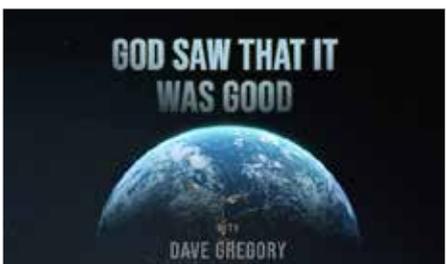
We Will Repay

We Will Repay is a new and accessible set of Bible studies which support churches as they think through the Biblical rationale for reparations. By using Old and New Testament narratives that support reparations, author Eleasah Louis argues why the God of justice is fully in support of reparatory justice. For churches keen to know why reparations has become a popular conversation - but more importantly what the Bible has to say about reparations - *We Will Repay* is the resource to read. Click here [to order a copy from our online shop](#).



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](#).



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.



Disability Awareness Week

Through the Roof encourages all churches to reach out and meet with disabled people in their community in Disability Awareness Week (15-22 September). This could be through organised church events or through individuals inviting a disabled person they know to meet for a coffee to get to know them. Join online for the [Disability Awareness Week launch service](#) at 15:00 on Sunday 15 September to explore the Disability Awareness Sunday 2024 theme: 'Journey with Jesus'. Click here [to order a free resource pack](#) for your church.



Homelessness Sunday

Christian homelessness charity Housing Justice is organising Homelessness Sunday on Sunday 6 October – the Sunday before World Homeless Day. The theme for this year is 'Homelessness ends with Communities' and the charity is sharing a range of resources for churches wishing to hold their own Homelessness Sunday service including readings, prayers, hymns and junior church resources, as well as information on how churches can help to alleviate homelessness in their own communities. [Click here for more details](#).



Challenge Poverty Week

Challenge Poverty Week takes place every year, and this year is 14-20 October in England and Wales, and 7-13 October in Scotland. It is a time to act together to end poverty, to tell people in power what needs to change, and to help enable everyone to thrive. Together with Church Action on Poverty and as part of the Let's End Poverty movement, JPIT has created a [collection of resources to help you and your church](#) engage with Challenge Poverty Week, which will be available soon.



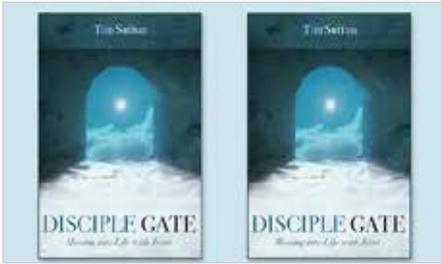
World Vision's Pumpkin Heroes - Don't miss out!

[Order your free Pumpkin Heroes pack](#) from World Vision for children aged 4-10 in your church, school, or family. Perfect for Sunday school, church light parties, Key Stage 1 & 2 school lessons, or autumn half term fun! Pumpkin Heroes is full of games, crafts, activities and the new story and film - where your children will learn about sharing and making the most of what we have. Because there's more than enough!



Interfaith Week Resources

This year Inter Faith Week will run from 10 to 17 November, and is an opportunity for people of all faiths and beliefs and inter-faith groups to engage in activities that bring people of different religions and beliefs together, whether to build understanding or improve conditions in their area of influence. [Click here for resources](#).



Disciple Gate: Moving into Life with Jesus

'We have all we need - if we take discipleship seriously', Baptist minister Tim Sutton reflects on his new book. Today many people are disconnected from the discipleship journey - or unsure of where to start. *Disciple Gate* is a thoughtful, practical, and down-to-earth guide to discipleship that can help change that. [Read more about it](#) in Tim Sutton's article introducing the book.



Formed, broken, healed, restored

This new booklet from Hope Together communicates Jesus' good news in a way which appeals to both heart and mind - and touches everyone's everyday reality. Inspired by Isaiah 64:8: *You Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand* - it is written in accessible language to help in communicating Jesus' good news of salvation. Click here for Regional Minister [Nigel Coles' introduction to the booklet](#).

This month's featured events:



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



Praying for Hong Kong Hubs - Wednesday 11 September

The Baptists Together Hong Kong Response Project is aiming to set up 10 hubs around the country to build up a long-term support for Hong Kongers through our Baptist churches. The first step is a call to pastors and Hong Kongers to join in prayer. Through drawing people together and listening to God, we will be connecting people who are interested in supporting Hong Kongers. If you have an interest in supporting Hong Kongers or a desire to come together, you will be welcome to join our first prayer event on Zoom at 19:00. [Click here to register](#).



Discipleship that sustains - Thursday 12 September

Faith in Later Life is offering an online event to help church champions and church leaders consider what discipleship that can sustain us through the challenges of later life might look like. Anyone is welcome to sign up to join either the 13:30 or 19:30 session. Click here [for more information and to register](#).



Building Peace in a World at War - 27-29 September

Four Christian peace organisations will come together at Yarnfield Park, Staffordshire to explore a range of topics through a mixture of workshops, worship and keynote addresses. This includes a keynote and workshop on 'the Church, Christianity and the Far Right', led by Baptist minister, the Revd Dr Helen Paynter and Dr Marie Power. Click here [for more information and booking](#).



Launch of the new St Hild Centre for Baptist Ministry - Monday 30 September

Join this exciting event at STC Sheffield to celebrate the launch of the new St Hild Centre for Baptist Ministry. We will pray for this new centre, welcome new Director Nick Allan, reflect together on Baptist ministry in the North, and learn more about the resources and support on offer. General Secretary Lynn Green will be speaking, along with Nick who will give a vision for what is to come. [Click here to book your place.](#)



JustMoney Conference - Saturday 5 October

Join The Just Money Movement for their online morning conference for in-depth training in the skills you need to advocate for a fairer, greener world. Together they will explore how you can act for a fairer, greener future through practical workshops and inspiring addresses. [Click here for details and to book.](#)



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.](#)



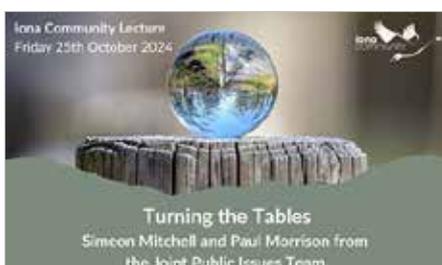
Thrive Conference - 18-20 October

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.



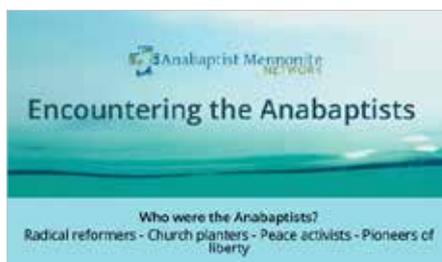
Turning the Tables - Friday 25 October

Join Simeon Mitchell and Paul Morrison from the Joint Public Issues Team for this lecture (in Edinburgh or join online) in which they will be exposing some of the unsustainable assumptions that lie at the heart of current economic approaches. By drawing on the Bible alongside examples of local initiatives that challenge conventional economic thinking, they will explore how we can all play a part in building an economy that enables the flourishing of all life. [Click here for details.](#)



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](#).