



Update: July 2024

Dear Friends

As we prepare for tomorrow's General Election, our Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is encouraging us all to pray and has written the following prayer:

Election Day Prayer

God of all power, on this election day be with us as we love, pray and vote. We pray for our country, for voters, for candidates and their teams, for election officials, and for a safe, free and fair process.

We pray that choices will be made with wisdom and actions will be guided by love. And as Jesus taught us, we pray that your kingdom will come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. Amen

JPIT has also published a [Post Election Day Prayer](#) on their website. We encourage you to pray - and to vote tomorrow.

Below you will find a further selection of stories, news, resources and events which we hope will be of interest and useful in your church context.

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:



'What a place for the church to be' - chaplains ministered to hundreds of festival goers at this year's Download Festival



A local primary school has found a temporary home in The Baptist Church, Kilmington for the final half term of the year



Let's End Poverty messages shared by churches during election - inviting candidates to set out plans to tackle the issue

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](#).



Baptists Together Mission Forum – June 2024

The Mission Forum gathered at Yarnfield Conference Centre in Staffordshire last month. After welcoming new members, and thinking about each person's identity and missional calling, three main items engaged the Forum in conversation, careful listening and discernment over the course of the meeting - Project Violet, Migration and Baptist Assembly. Click here to [read a report of the meeting](#).



Project Violet - findings

The findings of [Project Violet](#) were released on 2 May, and many people began to engage with them at the launch webinar and at Assembly later in the month. 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? **The deadline for responding to the findings is 30 September.**



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

This month's featured resources:



July Prayer Diary

The [July Prayer Diary](#) is now available to download from our website.

The particular themes this month are:

- Our newly elected government, following the General Election
- The South West Baptist Association
- The Ministries Team
- Those travelling over the summer, and people working in the holiday industry

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



Disability Awareness Sunday

There are many barriers disabled people can face on their journey to join, or be fully included, in church fellowships. Accessibility of church buildings isn't the only barrier for disabled people – there are lots of invisible barriers too, such as challenges fitting in socially and feeling you belong emotionally. Disability charity Through the Roof is inviting churches to celebrate Disability Awareness Week by including local disabled people and holding a service on Sunday 22 September 2024, or a day of their choice. A [free church resource pack is available to download](#) from their website, on the theme 'Journey with Jesus'.



Proximity

Proximity is a brand-new, free resource hub from The Message Trust, for urban missionaries. It's packed with resources, videos, advice, teaching, podcasts and much more covering all areas of mission. And most importantly, it's being created by urban missionaries - the people on the ground who know what it's like - who can help equip and empower others as they step out into the mission God's called them to. As well as the resource hub, Proximity is going to create community online and in-person through regular gatherings across the UK.

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



Little Bricks of Little Books

Launched in February this year, Christian charity Lifewords' 'gift a brick' scheme (where supporters donate £25 to gift a *Little Brick* to a ministry) has proved popular. Lifewords has 100 of its *Little Brick of Little Books* resource to gift to churches, ministries and organisations - applicants are invited to outline how a *Little Brick* resource would be used within their ministry and what impact it could have. Lifewords will then select from the list of applications and set about giving each *Little Brick* a worthy home. [Apply using this online form](#) and let Lifewords know how you plan to put the *Little Brick* to effective use in your context.

This month's featured events:



Reaching Hong Kongers through Alpha - Wednesday 17 July

Are you planning to run, or exploring, *Alpha* for Hong Kongers in your church? *Alpha* is a series of group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. In this webinar (from 19:30-21:00), Sharon Shek (Baptists Together Hong Kong Response Project) and Angus Chow (*Alpha* UK) will explore the Cantonese *Alpha* resources, how *Alpha* can work in a bilingual English and Cantonese setting, tips and advice on running *Alpha*, as well as hearing stories of those who are already running it to reach their Hong Kong community. [Click here to apply to join the webinar.](#)



Applying for National Churches Trust Grants - Thurs 18 July

The National Churches Trust (NCT) will be running a free training session from 12 noon - 13:00 for Baptist churches across the UK to help with applying for their grants. The session will include an introduction to NCT grants and tips on applying, as well as examples of Baptist churches who have been successful in their application for a grant. [Click here to find out more and to register.](#)



Evangelism among Older People - Thursday 18 July

Faith in Later Life is hosting this webinar to help church champions and church leaders consider the importance, difference, and the 'how to' of evangelism among older people. CEO Alexandra Drew will interview lifelong evangelist Ian Knox who he will share his experience, insights, and passion for evangelism among older people. There is a choice of two sessions to join - 13:30 and 19:30. Click here [for more information and to register](#) for one of the sessions.



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](#).



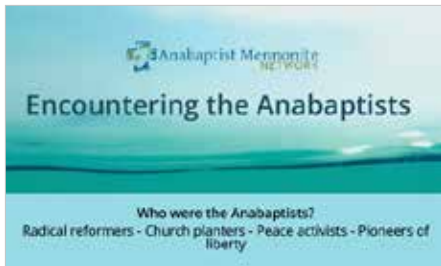
Sam Sharpe Lecture - Thursday 24 October

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 will open soon - please save the date.



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.](#)