



Update: June 2024

Dear Friends

So, it's just three weeks to go until the General Election! No wait! Don't go!...

Phew, you're still reading. I guess for all of us, the words 'General Election' might evoke a vast array of different emotions; excitement, despondency, anger, apathy, motivation, fear, nervousness. But despite all of this, we know many churches are fired up for engagement, ensuring people are registered and are neck deep in the admin of arranging a hustings to help congregation members and the wider public feel informed (Steve would love you to send stories and pictures!).

However you are feeling about the General Election, perhaps we can all agree that the decision made by the country on 4 July will cause some to be elated and others to be distraught (with every emotion in between), it will have consequences that will be felt by the wealthy and the poor, the powerful and the marginalized, those with faith and those with none – every corner of this nation will be impacted, and no doubt, communities across the world will be too. So as those called to seek the peace and wellbeing of the places into which we have been sent, we hope this election will not be ignored in our churches and that you will join us as we pray for all those willing to stand, and for God's Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control to be tangibly present in all the conversations we enable.

You will find below lots of resources and links that relate to the election alongside reports and updates on Assembly, Council, CLT and plenty more. We hope you will find much that will be a blessing to you and your church communities.

May you sense God's presence in all you do. In the safe steps on a familiar road and in the courageous leaps into the unknown, may the Spirit enfold you and embolden you. Be blessed, be a blessing.

Diane, Hilary, Jane, Mary, Mat, Mike, Paul, Sharon, Steve and Wale

Faith and Society Team

This month's featured stories:



Baptist Union Council: June 2024
- agreed a series of proposals to make Baptists Together financially sustainable



A new worship song with a silent section in British Sign Language
was created collaboratively at the Baptist Assembly



'We meet in a park, on the beach, even out on the water'
- the story of Ocean Church in Southern Counties Baptist Ass'n

News:



Baptist Assembly 2024 - Reports and Recordings

It was encouraging to meet so many of our Baptist family at this year's Assembly in Telford last month. We have now updated our website with reports from the weekend and recordings of Lynn Green's addresses. If you weren't able to join us this year, please [have a look at the Assembly website](#) to listen to Lynn's messages, read about the different elements of our time together, and be praying for our new ministers who were commissioned at Assembly.

Please note that our next Assembly will be from **16-17 May 2025** in West Bromwich - more details to follow.



Key messages from Core Leadership Team meeting

The Core Leadership Team and the Trustees met together at Yarnfield Park in June. They began by reflecting on Scripture, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:68-69) and praying for each other. Click here to [read a report of the meeting and topics discussed](#).



The General Election - Thursday 4 July

What might your church do to engage in the lead up to this critical moment for the UK and the communities you serve?... The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) has recently launched three major resources for churches to consider.

- [A Hustings Resource](#) - a comprehensive guide to arranging a local hustings event. With lots of varieties of election meetings to consider, the time is here to reach out to your local ecumenical networks and start planning.
- [A General Election issues briefing](#) - covering the six issues that frame JPIT's work, this resource explains why we as Christians should give serious consideration to these issues and explores how the issues are relevant at this time in the UK. It also offers a list of three adaptable questions you might like to ask parliamentary candidates.
- [Voter Registration Champions](#). The Electoral Commission estimates that 8 million eligible voters will miss out because they are not properly registered. 4 million eligible voters will miss out because they don't have Photo ID. And 14 million eligible voters won't see the point of turning out to vote. Let's do what we can to ensure all those our churches have contact with have the ability and motivation to take part in the election.

[Click here to find all the resources on the JPIT website.](#)

In addition, CTBI and The Joint Public Issues Team have recorded a webinar on the theme of '[Hosting a Hustings for the General Election](#)' - it's not too late to organise such a meeting (but it soon will be).



Constituency Action Network

Engaging in politics should not be a once in every five years occurrence, and that's why JPIT is developing a Constituency Action Network of at least one church in every constituency who has a good relationship with their MP. [If you want to be involved in the Constituency Action Network](#), sign up to receive updates about its launch after the General Election.

This month's featured resources:



June Prayer Diary

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

- The Core Leadership Team and Baptist Union Council meeting
- Project Violet and the implementation of its findings
- Refugee Week 2024
- Baptist Chaplains and Armed Forces Day
- The Yorkshire Baptist Association

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



Baptists Together magazine - Summer 2024

Church secretaries, treasurers and ministers were sent copies of the latest *Baptists Together* magazine 'When we pray' and [Transform 67](#) last month, and we hope that the articles and information are helpful in your context. Please share the printed copies with your church - or provide links to the [whole magazine](#) or [individual articles](#) on our website. If you would like to use one or more of the articles in your church magazine, you are welcome to do so - please include an acknowledgement that they were originally published in the *Baptists Together* magazine.



Politics in the Pulpit

JPIT continues to publish weekly episodes of [Politics in the Pulpit](#), every Tuesday, which will include a General Election special episode this month. This is JPIT's lectionary based preaching resource, which asks how politics relate to the readings for the coming Sunday, and pulls themes of justice out of the readings. In addition, Baptist minister Nathan McGuire (JPIT Campaigns and Church Engagement Officer) has written a [blog post about Preaching and Praying during the Election period](#) with some suggestions for how to do this.



Free Table Talk for Elections

It is often said that there are two subjects you should never talk about around the dinner table — politics and religion. However, with election fever now well underway, The Ugly Duckling Company has created a free downloadable Table Talk pack for you to have some discussions around the election. With questions such as: If you were to write a manifesto what would be in it? Should you pray for a specific party to win the election? If you were a party leader what song would you choose to have played in the background when you speak? How do you decide if something is true? Where do you find Hope?

[Click here to download the resource.](#)



Outdoor Worship

During the summer, your church may be planning to worship outdoors, whether in the church grounds, a local park, woods, hills, or even just in a back garden. The team at Engage Worship have put together *Worship in the Woods* based on seven years of running a local Park Church. There are ten sessions of adaptable worship times, exploring nature themes through activities and Bible interaction. In addition, their recent *Whole Church Worship* intergenerational book has a session on "God's Wonderful World". Click here to [browse the various outdoor worship ideas](#) on the Engage Worship website.

This month's featured events:



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.](#)



Creation Cries Out - Saturday 22 June

Join Christian environmental groups and churches to pray, worship and lament in the context of biodiversity decline and climate breakdown. Meet at 11:00 in Central London at Farm Street Church to gather for reflection, worship and prayer - lasting about an hour. You are very welcome to continue on to the Restore Nature Now march afterwards at 13:00, from Park Lane to Parliament Square. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)



Walk with Me - Sunday 23 June

You are invited to join a multi-faith silent meditation peace walk from 15:00-17:00 in Parliament Square, London - facilitated by Plum Village UK and Quakers in Britain. All are welcome to come and remember people killed in war and call for an end to killing, for nonviolence, reconciliation and a just peace. Make and bring a white flower. You're welcome to wear mourning clothes. No banners, signs, placards or flags. [Click here for more information.](#)



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.](#)



Beckly Lecture 2024 - Monday 1 July

Join JPIT at the annual Beckly Lecture starting at 18:45. We will be hearing from Emma Revie, CEO of The Trussell Trust discussing 'What would it take to end poverty in the UK?' This event is part of the Methodist Conference, but is open to everyone. You can attend in person at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, or online, for free. [Click here to reserve a ticket.](#)



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](#).



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](#).