



Update: October 2024

Dear Friends

Welcome to October's Faith and Society update, providing a selection of good news stories, resources, and events.

"But..." we hear the cry; "autumn has definitely arrived in weather and workload!" You may feel you don't even have time to read the rest of this introducti...

Hoping you're still here, let us quickly say why this month's mailing is worth at least a speed scroll;

- **Baptist Assembly** – now has a three-year strategic mission focus which will also offer national discussion and resolutions. [We would like you there.](#)
- **Presidency** – Could you or someone you know serve Baptists Together by becoming our President during 2026-7? [Full details now available.](#)
- **Challenge poverty week 14-20 Oct.** 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. [Resources from JPIT are here to help you speak into this.](#)
- **Black History month.** October is Black History Month and there are a number of [home-grown resources for you and your church community to reflect on.](#)
- **Everyone Everywhere conference.** Are you passionate about seeing new Christian communities spring up in places where they're most needed? [If so do book into the conference happening 8 October.](#)
- **Constituency Action Network.** The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is encouraging all churches to let their MP know that they care, and are praying for them. [See here for more information.](#)

We hope the above and the other information shared offers a blessing to you and those you are called to serve during this busy autumn period. Every blessing

Diane, Hilary, Jane, Londy, 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:



'Enabling people to be deeply human in safety' - Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries equips the church



Wellspring Church in Wirksworth constructs record fairtrade banana split to mark its 10th anniversary



A Baptist church's seaside community hub staffed by volunteers is thriving, thanks to a grant from Baptist Insurance

News:



Presidency Nominations 2026-27

We are now inviting nominations for the person who will serve as Baptist Union President in 2026-27. All ministers, church secretaries and treasurers should have received an email from us on Friday 27 September outlining what the role entails, and how to nominate a person for this national role. The deadline for receipt of all nominations is 31 December, and the election discernment process will be held in the first months of 2025. [Click here for details](#)



Core Leadership Team Key Messages

Our Core Leadership Team enjoyed being together last month. It was a positive, encouraging and hopeful gathering where we were constantly reminded of the reality of the Kingdom of God in our midst. One of the key roles of the Core Leadership Team is to come together to pray and share so that we can perceive what God is doing. This then helps shape our wider Baptist discernment through Council. [Click here to read a report of the meeting.](#)



Three-year mission vision for Baptist Assembly

Throughout our 400-year history, mission has been at the heart of who we are. With evangelism and discipleship, it is clearly what still drives our leaders and churches as they seek to reflect the heart of God in their own particular communities. In recent years the Baptist Assembly has reflected this mission focus - and as we move into and beyond the mid 2020s, it will continue to do so. Our Assemblies in 2025, 2026 and 2027 will all focus on mission through different lenses. Venues have been booked and the events will offer a place where discernment, storytelling, equipping, resourcing and good practice around mission take place. [Click here to find out more.](#)



The Bill Snelson Young Ecumenists Fund

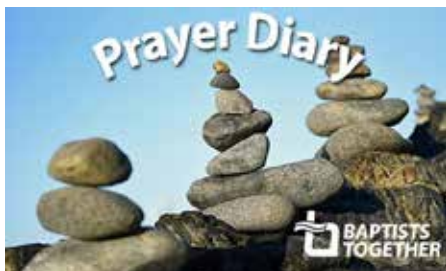
This fund was set up in 2023 by Churches Together in England and the Snelson family in memory of Bill Snelson - a dedicated ecumenist who was General Secretary of Churches Together England from 1997 - 2008. It aims to give young ecumenists (between the ages of 18 and 35) the opportunity to experience ecumenism abroad. Click here [for more information](#), and pass it on to anyone you know who may like to apply. The deadline for applications is 31 October.



Constituency Action Network

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is encouraging all churches to let their MP know that they care, and are praying for them. If you have a story to share to encourage other churches to support their local MP, please get in touch with your reflections by emailing hello@jpit.org. JPIT is also creating a network of congregations that are committed to developing a meaningful relationship with their MP. Click here to [find out more](#), including a recording of the recent Constituency Action Network launch webinar.

This month's featured resources:



October Prayer Diary

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

- Black History Month and the Sam Sharpe Lecture
- Prisons Week - prisoners, their families, and prison staff
- Hong Kong Response Project - Sharon Shek and Londy Chan
- The South Eastern Baptist Association

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



Black History Month resources

October is Black History Month and there are a number of resources available to support Baptists Together develop intercultural churches. The most recently published resources are *We Must Repay*, written by Dr Eleasah Lewis, on the topic of reparations and *History, Rebellion and Reform* – a collection of the last ten Sam Sharpe Lectures. Click here for the [list of resources](#) and links to access them.



To hope and act with creation

Dave Gregory, the convenor of BUEN, The Baptist Union Environment Network has collated some resources for this year's Season of Creation to help churches explore and celebrate the wonder of creation.

Click here [for Dave's recommendations](#).



Why disability inclusion is so important

Christian charity Through the Roof produced a series of videos and shorts for Disability Awareness Sunday last month. One set features Helen Cameron (President of the Methodist Conference, Moderator of the UK Free Churches Group and President of CTE) in a series of five **videos about church disability inclusion**. The second set, on the theme '**Journey with Jesus**' was created from an interview with Baptist minister Andrew Miles - a hospital chaplain and wheelchair user, who has an assistance dog. These videos are worth sharing with your church when discussing accessibility and inclusion.



Share Jesus International (SJI) - Sharing Jesus Quiz

SJI has commissioned research to better understand how practising Christians in the UK share their faith. The research identified four main tensions when it comes to faith sharing. Tension around whether faith sharing starts with the message or the person; is done personally or corporately; is done in word or action; and is understood with a concluding moment or as part of an ongoing journey. These tensions are based on everyday attitudes and highlight that there is no one way of doing things. Using the tensions, six faith sharing styles have been developed and an online quiz is available to enable Christians to discover how they tend to share their faith. The profiles affirm and celebrate some aspects whilst also giving each person a 'stretch' or something to develop. [Click here to access the quiz](#).



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.](#)



Lifewords *Little Book of Advent*

Lifewords has released a brand-new Bible resource to equip and inspire individuals, groups, and churches to engage with the season of Advent. Rooted in verses from Scripture, *Little Book of Advent* is a 56-page booklet that explores different aspects of Advent, reflecting on the season's meaning, building anticipation to the birth of Jesus, and looking forward to the future fullness of God's reign. Like all Lifewords resources, *Little Book of Advent* is freely available, but donations are both appreciated and encouraged. To be ready for Advent, early ordering is advised. Click here to [get your copy of Little Book of Advent](#) and find out more.



Shine your light Christmas 2024

Imagine 100,000 Christians on the streets at Christmas singing carols and sharing the Gospel everywhere! Shine Your Light is a nationwide Christmas collaboration of many Christian denominations, taking place over the weekend of 13-15 December. Last year, hundreds of flashmob style carol events, open air Christingle services and nativity events from the small to the large - including some in Castles, country parks and housing estates - took place. This year, the vision is to see how the united Church can put Christ back into Christmas so that the whole nation can hear the bold proclamation of Good News and why we sing 'Joy to the World!' Click here [for more information, resources and registration.](#)



For your Christmas outreach

A special Christmas issue of Good News evangelistic newspaper will be available after 5 November and at only 20p per copy (plus p&p) it's a great value giveaway at carol services, Christmas events and outreaches. Filled with testimonies of both celebrities and 'ordinary' Christians, churches and evangelists across the country use Good News every month. For a free sample of the current edition or to order, email goodnewsoffice7@gmail.com. You can read the Christmas issue online before ordering at www.goodnews-paper.org.uk after 5 November.

This month's featured events:



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 Aid online Gaza vigil - Monday 7 October

The conflict in Gaza and the Middle East is having a devastating effect in the region. Join Christian Aid to pause, pray and stand in solidarity for peace as part of their online vigil from 08:00-09:00. Pray for peace and wisdom, and commit ourselves to peace with the people we share God's world with. Peace in our homes, in our neighbourhoods; peace with stranger and soulmate. God's peace for places in pieces.

Click here [for more information and sign up to join the vigil.](#)



Everyone Everywhere conference - Tuesday 8 October

Are you passionate about seeing new Christian communities spring up in places where they're most needed? Do you have a heart for sharing the message of Jesus in innovative and impactful ways? If so, you won't want to miss this pivotal event in Sheffield – a day designed to energize, equip, and encourage you to be part of launching new missional communities, churches, and Christian gatherings across the UK. Click here [for more information and a link to book your place.](#)



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.](#)



The Church, The Far Right and The Claim to Christianity - Monday 14 October

A book launch at Regent's Park College Oxford at 14:00 and panel with Helen Paynter from the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence along with Maria Power, Paul Weller and Paul Fiddes. Admission Free. This event will look at the place of the dissenting traditions in relation to the subject of the far right and Christianity. Click here for [details and links to register.](#)



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.](#)



Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer - Monday 4 November

For nearly 75 years, sisters in Christ have united in prayer for the Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer. The Day is marked annually on the first Monday in November, and all are invited to unite in prayer, hosted by Baptist World Alliance Women. The 2024 theme is 'Purposeful Life' drawn from Romans 8:28: 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose'. [Click here for more information.](#)



Whitley Lecture - Monday 4 November

Tim Judson's timely and powerful reflection on Whiteness (*Dark Weeping and Light Sleeping: Whiteness as a Doctrine of De-formation*) is a deeply personal and carefully argued appeal that combines theological insights with biblical reflection. Through exploring the trauma Jesus experienced as he anticipated the cross he opens up neglected themes in the gospels' account of Jesus' agony in the garden of Gethsemane, illuminating questions of justice and identity. This Whitley lecture demands a response that begins with sitting with the uncomfortable truth it explores. [Click here for more information about the Lecture](#) and [use this link to join online at 19:00.](#)



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.](#)



Interrogating Injustices - Wednesday 13 November

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles is one of the standout, world leading historians on the history of the Caribbean, particularly the transatlantic African Maafa or the trade in enslaved Africans. His work has helped to lead the contemporary call for Reparations for the legacies of slavery. The Centre for Baptist Studies, the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture, Regent's Park College, New Road Baptist Church and the Race and Resistance seminar, TORCH, in the University of Oxford invite you to attend an afternoon seminar and an evening book launch to celebrate a recent book *Interrogating Injustices* that has been published in honour of Professor Beckles. Admission free, the afternoon event has a few places left but the evening event (which may be of more general interest) has plenty of places remaining as it is in a larger venue.

[Click here for details and links to register.](#)



Project Violet International Symposium - 15-16 January 2025

The Centre for Baptist Studies in conjunction with Baptists Together are organising this online Symposium, to which we are inviting academically-engaged Baptist women from around the world to discuss the findings of Project Violet and the actions arising from this extensive investigation into women's experiences of ministry. There will be three 2-hour sessions each day; 08:00-10:00, 14:00-16:00 and 19:00-21:00. We don't want cost to be a barrier to attending so please contact the conference organiser if cost is a concern as we have some bursaries available. Building on the experience of Project Violet we are making this a woman-only space in order to encourage women's participation.

[Click here for further details and the link to register.](#)



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.](#)