

SWBA E-NEWS ROUNDUP JANUARY 2012

Welcome to your monthly round-up of news, events, resources and reminders from SWBA, the national Baptist family and beyond. Please forward this to others in your church who may be interested to know what's going on locally and nationally, and please include information about events in your notice sheet, magazine or on the noticeboard, as appropriate.

SWBA MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

5-7 MARCH 2012

The Saunton Sands Hotel, North Devon

Main Speaker: Revd Dr Pat Took

"Above and Beyond – Reflections on John's Gospel"

Full details and booking forms have now been emailed to all serving ministers – if you haven't received yours please email Chris or check <http://www.swbaptists.org.uk/events/ministersconference.html> where details will appear shortly. Retired ministers should also receive details shortly, or check the website.



BUGB FUTURES

A Baptist Futures Group was established by BU Council at its meeting in November 2011, in response to an increasingly likely, significant budget deficit. While it was something that could not be ignored, this was seen as an opportunity to seriously reflect on what our key priorities should be in the decades ahead. Baptist Christians in the UK have been responsible and generous in their giving to the work of God's Kingdom beyond their local church, and it is vital to be equally responsible in the way that those resources are used.

There are important decisions that need to be made, and some of these may well be difficult. That is why it is important to ensure that the consultation is as wide as possible and everyone is encouraged to think creatively as we seek to engage with the challenge before us.

Our world is in a state of unprecedented change at the moment; many accepted certainties and ways of doing things are becoming increasingly questioned. As Baptists we cannot expect to be immune from that, and it is vital to re-examine how we engage in mission and sustain our shared life in the light of this. Our prayer is that we might emerge better equipped to fulfil our common calling within the purposes and mission of our God.

The work of the Futures Group will be enabled by a small steering group, who have been appointed in recognition of the insight and experience that they will bring to the task. It is not for them to make decisions on behalf of others, nor to represent the interests of any party, but to ensure that those who do are properly informed and supported in their task.

One of their initial concerns is to ensure that as many people as possible are included and listened to in the consultation process.

An online survey is currently available to enable anyone in the Baptist family to participate in this process and express their views. SWBA encourages as many people as possible, particularly those of you in leadership of our churches, to complete this survey and to make use of the boxes which invite your individual comments and thoughts on how the Baptist family might best organise itself for the future. To take part in the survey please click on this link (you may need to hold down CTRL + click):

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FuturesGroupSurvey>

The closing date for responses is **30 January**. Responses will be collated and discussed by the Futures Group in readiness for Baptist Union Council in March 2012. There may be further opportunities for your participation in this process of consultation and hope where appropriate you might complete further online questionnaires as we begin to narrow our focus. An additional Baptist Union Council is likely to be held at the end of June, where we anticipate some key decisions will be made.

We'll be giving an update on how things are progressing to our ministers at the Ministers' Conference in March, and this will be another opportunity to express your thoughts but please do complete the survey as well. We hope to be able to bring a report of the June Council to a wider audience around the South West in September – we are investigating the possibility of holding a number of gatherings around the Districts in the autumn rather than one single Annual Assembly in the summer this year, to enable us to share as widely as possible the decisions which are likely to be made in July. E-news will give further details of this in due course.

Most of all we want to ask you to **pray** for this whole process, and for the Steering Group as they seek to make wise decisions for the future. Jez is a member of the group, and will need to give significant time to this piece of work during 2012.

Thank you for your support, and for assisting in this process.

YOUTH WORK IN SWBA

Attached to the e-news email this month is a youth work survey. This is an initial information-gathering exercise to help us build up a general picture of what's happening in our churches. Please pass this survey to whoever has lead responsibility for your children's and youth work. The survey is being coordinated by David Slater from Brixington Community Church in Exmouth – please email your completed surveys directly to him. We're grateful to David for the time he's giving to this piece of work. The survey will also be available to download from <http://www.swbaptists.org.uk/resources/enews.html>

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BEING A CHURCH TREASURER

We'd like to gauge the level of interest in a training session which does exactly what it says on the tin – a beginner's guide for anyone who is undertaking treasurer's duties but doesn't have much experience and would welcome some help and reassurance. The session will probably be in March, and could be on an evening, or a Saturday morning, whatever would suit the majority. Please note this will be a basic / beginners session.

To help us know if a session would be viable, please email Kathy at admin@swbaptists.org.uk by the end of January to let us know you'd be interested, and whether you'd prefer an evening or a Saturday morning. We'll then get back to you in February to confirm the details.

FROM BRISTOL BAPTIST COLLEGE

On the retirement of Revd Dr Ernest Lucas the college seeks to appoint a Tutor

- to share in the formation of women and men for Christian ministry
- to teach and supervise research in one or more of the following areas: Biblical Studies, Christian Doctrine, Mission Studies, as part of the academic programme shared with Trinity College, Bristol
- to contribute to the life and leadership of the College

Closing Date for applications March 2nd 2011

For further details contact The College Manager, Bristol Baptist College, The Promenade, Clifton Down, BRISTOL BS8 3NJ brealeyf@bristol-baptist.ac.uk or telephone 0117 946 7050

BAPTIST ASSEMBLY

“Beyond 400” – Friday 4 May – Sunday 6 May 2012, Central Hall Westminster, London

Everyone is welcome at this important event in the life of our denomination as we explore together what it means to be Baptist in today's world and celebrate together 400 years of Baptist witness in the UK and beyond. Gathering in the heart of London 400 years after the first Baptist church on home soil began, the Assembly will give delegates a tangible experience of how our worldwide faith impacts the whole of life.

Find out more about the theme, the speakers, how to book and much more at <http://www.baptistassembly.org.uk/html>

OTHER INVITATIONS & RESOURCES

AN INVITATION FROM SALTASH BAPTIST CHURCH

On Saturday 4 February 2012 we say goodbye to our minister Jeff Howden after 22 years of ministry at Saltash Baptist Church. We warmly invite anyone from SWBA who knows Jeff & Janet to join us for a special service of farewell at 3pm, followed by tea.