



**February 2017**

## NEWS

**HOME MISSION GIVING:** The Association total for giving to Baptist Home Mission in 2016 was £329,746, up from £327,122 in 2015 but below our target of £332,659. Many thanks for your continued prayer and generous giving that makes ministry and mission possible. Regrettably the overall national total fell in 2016. The failure to achieve the national appeal will be reflected in the funding available to the Association for operational and grant funds and it is anticipated that the 2018 budget will show a reduction in funds to associations. So, please pray for those charged with addressing the Union's finances and also pray for the Association trustees that they will be able to put the funds available to best use.

**FACTS & FIGURES:** Your church should have received recently the Annual Return from the Baptist Union of Great Britain. Please make sure that this information is processed and returned, whether online or post. It is such a blessing for the Baptist Union to have the right information and the right contacts.

**FOR TRUSTEES:** We had intended to run a training session for Trustees on March 11<sup>th</sup> but after consultation with the session leader, we have agreed to postpone this until later in the year.

**ASSOCIATION COUNCIL: Digest January 2017** The Association Council met on January at Bradwell Chapel, Milton Keynes. It was recorded that the Association had nominated the Revd David Gregory (Croxley Green BC) as Vice President of the Baptist Union 2017-18. Reports were received from Geoff Colmer and Colin Pye and some places on Association-connected committees and organisations were noted. There had been two nomination for Council – Andrew Openshaw (Herts) and David Warrington (Northants).

It was noted with regret that Danesholme LEP, Corby had closed at Christmas and that Earls Barton (Northants) would hold its last service in April. Also noted that Keysoe Row & Thurleigh BC (Beds) was becoming a single congregation LEP with the parish church, then to be known as Thurleigh United Church.

Consideration was given to the Council strategy, in particular the section relating to “developing Christ centred, committed and equipped disciples for different forms of ministry”. The strategy is assessed on a regular basis to make sure that any elements achieved are deleted, continuing objectives affirmed and new ones given expression.

Karen Hopkins, the Association Treasurer, reported that the draft out-turn from 2016 had been a lower deficit than budgeted (ca £50k and not £60k). This figure would probably be adjusted slightly after revaluations and depreciations. Home Mission giving had risen slightly from £327.122 to £329.746, a cause for satisfaction. Some £122.788 had been given in Home Mission grants. Response to the national appeal had been muted and a challenging budget for 2018 was anticipated. There had been queries arising from the Financial Services Act about whether the Association was able to make loans without specific authorisation. Advice would be sought. This did not affect current loans outstanding.

Due to the static low returns on deposits, trustees had requested a small group to investigate moving some reserves into an investment portfolio and interviews had been held with several appropriate firms. It was decided to appoint 7IM as the Association investment broker. Whilst this would not bring overnight financial success, it was intended to bring medium term a better return on reserves, which was necessary to bridge the budget deficit. Council was aware that the risk factor was raised in this sort of investment but on balance deemed the increased risk acceptable.

The difficulties with the Baptist Pensions Scheme were rehearsed with expressions of regret and a certain amount of helplessness. Concern was expressed for churches that are finding it a burden to meet the historic debt repayments. The trustees were willing to consider proposals being brought forward nationally to offset some of the historic debt but were also aware of the need to maintain the service and resources of the Association in line with their charity responsibilities. It is hoped that a meeting led by people involved in the national discussions will be held in the Association in mid-year where representatives of churches will be able to gather and discuss the pension situation. SLC January 2017

## PEOPLE

- **Beth Powney** (Sandy Baptist) has been appointed as Team Leader of Eastern Baptist Association, to take up post in July.
- **Paul Carey-Slater** has been licensed as the minister at Grange Park LEP in Northampton.
- We are sorry to note that **Danesholme LEP, Corby** held its last service on Christmas Day and a well-attended thanksgiving service was then held on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for the remaining members as they seek fellowship in other congregations.

## RESOURCES

**ASSOCIATION GRANTS:** The next deadline for Central Baptist Association **grant applications** is March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. Application forms are available from the Treasurer, Karen Hopkins.

**CONVERSATION WELCOME:** At the end of this month, the Joint Public Issues Team [*Baptist Union, Methodist, Church of Scotland and URC*] will be launching a new resource, one that will invite church groups to sit down and have healthy, balanced conversations about our shared society. *Conversation Welcome* will explore how we can build God's Kingdom together in the run-up to the invocation of Article 50 and the resulting departure from the European Union. The pack will lead participating groups through theological reflections about how we treat others, use our resources and make decisions, and then invite carefully considered conversation and prayer.


Over the last year we have seen an awful lot of debate, perhaps some conversation would be welcome? The resource will launch [here](#) at the end of January.

**OFFICE MANAGER AND MINISTER'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT VACANCY:** "An opportunity has arisen at High Street Baptist Church, Tring for an Office Manager and Minister's Personal Assistant to join our staff team. Hours of work are 09.30 to 12.30, Monday to Friday. For further details of the Job Description, please take a look at our website - <http://www.tringbaptistchurch.co.uk/>. If you are interested in

applying, please submit a full CV and covering letter to our Minister at [adcowley@btinternet.com](mailto:adcowley@btinternet.com). Closing date for applications is noon on Friday 17th February 2017. Please be aware that there are Genuine Occupational Requirements (GOR) that the post holder is a Christian”.

## EVENTS

opportunities to develop your understanding and skills




**4th March 2017**  
**Welcoming People  
With Additional Needs**

**Rev. Jonathan Edwards,**  
Advisor to 'Torch Trust for the Blind' and 'Through the Roof'  
Transitional Minister of Caversham Baptist Church




consider what the Bible teaches us about disability and welcome


- explore both the challenges and opportunities we face in welcoming people with additional needs

**The Church of Christ the King, Kents Hill, Milton Keynes, MK7 6HG**  
**9.30 am for 10.00 am till 4.15 pm**  
£33 [see booking form for concessions] Bring your lunch, drinks provided




DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS

more information  
see [centralba.org.uk](http://centralba.org.uk)



**Now is the time  
to start thinking about  
whether you should be  
coming on the next course  
starting September 2017**



Further Details from Anne Lane, Tutor in Community Learning, Regent's Park College.  
[anne.lane@regents.park.ac.uk](mailto:anne.lane@regents.park.ac.uk) 01276 785068 or 07986 323909

a FOOTSTEPS initiative

**FOOTSTEPS Pathway Day 4th March:** Since Jonathan Edwards moved on from being General Secretary of the Baptist Union he has given a great deal of time to support Christian disability organisations. For three years he was Ambassador for Prospects, an organisation supporting people with learning disabilities and their families. He is now acting as an adviser to Torch Trust for the Blind and Through the Roof. He writes, "I believe that the Gospel is Good News for everyone, whatever your ability or disability. Every church faces the exciting challenge of welcoming people with disabilities and I hope that this Footsteps Pathway Day will inspire and equip you whether you are an expert or have never spent much time thinking about this vital subject."

**ASSEMBLING TOGETHER:** Central Baptist Association Assembly: Saturday June 17<sup>th</sup> 2017 at Whaddon Way Church, Bletchley with main speaker, the Revd Dianne Tidball, incoming President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

**SAFEGUARDING:** There is a level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding course at Cotton End Baptist church, Bedford on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. Bookings to Stephen Copson.

**TAKE TIME TO REFLECT:** On Thursday 9 March 2017 there is a Quiet Day for Ministers at Chipperfield Baptist Church, The Street, Chipperfield, WD4 9BH, beginning at 10.00am with coffee and concluding at 3.30pm. The purpose of the day is to respond to the invitation of Jesus, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' Mk. 6.31. There will be some input but the day will offer space and quiet for reflection and prayer, a day not so much doing but being. Tea and coffee will be provided but please bring a lunch. The cost of the day is £5. Please email [geoff@colmer77.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:geoff@colmer77.fsnet.co.uk) so we can gauge numbers attending.

**HEAVYWEIGHT PREACHING IN A LIGHTWEIGHT AGE:** with Malcolm Duncan & Simon Ponsonby. Tuesday 7th March, 10:00–12:30 (followed by lunch). In a world of quick-fixes and short attention spans, how can we preach the gospel with substance and significance? Join Simon and Malcolm for a morning workshop as we

explore why and how our preaching can be heavyweight but still accessible.  
Suggested donation £5 for lunch. Please confirm attendance by 3rd March to Gold Hill Baptist Church, Gold Hill East, Chalfont St Peter, SL9 9DG. For further details contact: 01753 887173 Email: [office@goldhill.org](mailto:office@goldhill.org)