

## From the editor

**H**OW DO you cope in periods of change and uncertainty?

It's a timely question, for we are living in a period of recession and austerity. Job security is an issue for many.

Here at the Baptist Union of Great Britain we are in the middle of the Futures process, reimagining how we do things in the years ahead. In light of the budget deficit, there are likely to be some changes.

So how interesting that just at this time the Union's former home is to see new life.

Baptist Church House in Southampton Row served the denomination well for the best part of the century, but has lain pretty much unused ever since the move to Didcot in 1989.

That very move is a reminder that brave decisions were taken in the not-too-distant past. I'm sure it didn't happen without some pain.

Whatever the situation, there has to be hope. As I reflect on the future, I am reminded to guard my mind by affirming this reality: in Christ, we are saved.

Change and uncertainty may be happening all around us, but the message of salvation remains the same.

Contact Paul  
Hobson on 01235  
517677, editor@  
baptisttimes.  
co.uk



## PRAYER FOR PENTECOST

*Lord God, as once your Holy presence filled the temple, on Pentecost we thank you that your Holy Spirit now fills your people the Church.*

*Fill each of us with your Spirit that our lives are daily transformed from one degree of glory to another. Ignite in us a passion to seek your will, a desire to know your word, and a readiness to respond.*

*So fill us with your Spirit that our lives cannot help breathe out your praise.*

*Make your church a temple of the Holy Spirit.*

*Where there is injustice, make your church a royal priesthood and holy nation.*

*Where there is violence, make your church an ambassador for Christ.*

*Where there is greed, hatred or pride, grant your church a truly prophetic voice.*

## LEST WE FORGET

*With the Olympics in mind, let's pray for sports administrators, stewards, cleaners and turnstile operators.*

*Messengers on scooters and delivery boys and girls on bicycles.*

*Losers as well as winners.*

*Those who simply play games for pleasure.*

*Mums and dads who may never get near the Olympics but who face the elements on Saturday and Sunday mornings to give their offsprings a chance of a start.*

● Each Thursday [www.baptisttimes.co.uk](http://www.baptisttimes.co.uk) will aim to upload prayers for possible use on Sunday. 'Lest We Forget' covers all the people who rarely if ever appear in worship

## BAPTISMS

<b>Amersham:</b> Susan Dailey and Penelope Grainger .....	2
<b>Bognor:</b> Liz Lambert, Robert Little, Donna Cusack and Sammy Humphreys .....	4
<b>Chesham (Broadway):</b> Iain McGonigal, David Skepper, John Munns and Ray Jackson .....	4
<b>Colchester:</b> Alison Bridge .....	1
<b>Derby (Haven Christian Centre):</b> Matthew Yates .....	1
<b>Plymouth (Mutley):</b> Joel Seldon .....	1
<b>Tytherington:</b> Abigail Hughes .....	1
<b>Total</b> .....	14

Send notifications of baptisms, deaths, ministerial changes and testimonies to [editor@baptisttimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@baptisttimes.co.uk)

# THE BAPTIST TIMES



News Round-up • May 23, 2012 • No.018 • [www.baptisttimes.co.uk](http://www.baptisttimes.co.uk)

## Former Baptist House to become hotel

THE FORMER offices of the Baptist Union of Great Britain are to be redeveloped into a hotel.

Baptist Church House in Southampton Row in Holborn, London, will be converted and extended into a 67 room 'lifestyle hotel', according to agents Christie and Co, having recently been bought by a private buyer. It was listed for sale at £19m.

A striking building, it was built between 1901 and 1903 to house the offices of the Baptist Union.

It included the Union's Council Chamber, which in 1939 became known as the Shakespeare Room, after the general secretary at the time it was built. There was a library, too, while *The Baptist Times* was also based there.

The Union left in 1989, moving to Didcot and joint offices with BMS World Mission for the first time.



The historian's view

IN 1903 the Baptist Union offices re-located to Baptist Church House in Southampton Row, in the Holborn area of London.

Previously the Union had rented three rather dingy rooms in premises in Farnival Street, near Holborn Circus.

J.H. Shakespeare, the enterprising general secretary of the Union, raised the large sum of £34,000 (in the event it was £50,000) for Church House.

Many Baptists took considerable pride in the centre, with its panelled oak Council chamber and other fine features. A bronze statue of C.H. Spurgeon was sculpted and placed in the reception area. Southampton Row was in continuous use by Baptists and others for most of the 20th century.

The ecumenical body, the British Council of Churches, was inaugurated at Baptist Church House in 1942.

● Ian Randall is the author of *The English Baptists of the 20th Century*

The decision to co-locate the Union and BMS had actually been taken in the early 1960s, but it would take nearly three decades to see it realised. The then general secretary Bernard Green described a 'tortuous process' and 'long, drawn-out negotiations'.

Since the Union's departure Baptist Church House has been largely unused. It was originally sold to London Underground in order to make a new entrance to Holborn Tube Station for Crossrail, the scheme to build two new railway lines across London. Crossrail in that incarnation did not come about, though it has subsequently received Parliamentary backing.

The building was briefly used as a hostel for the homeless, but has remained unoccupied for many years, said Christie and Co agent Jonathan Parrish.

Though damaged in the Second World War, it was Grade II listed. It was placed on English Heritage's Buildings at Risk register by 2008, when planning permission was granted to convert it into a hotel.

It was designed by Arthur Keen and described by English Heritage as 'Wrenaissance in style'.

Mr Parrish said, 'Baptist Church House is an unusual building with some spectacular architectural features which will lend itself well to its new role as a lifestyle hotel, offering extensive dining and bar facilities.'

# Church opens community café to encourage healthy eating

A CHURCH has piloted a community café that combines growing fresh produce, preparing great food and learning how to eat well on a budget.

Nosh is a pop-up café that has been opening between 12 and 2pm each Wednesday throughout May at Memorial Community Church in Plaistow, East London.

It has been serving food grown in the Nosh garden, and is all part of a wider community food project. The idea is that people who volunteer in the garden or café get to eat for free, but the food is so good that people who live or work in the area come along too, providing income to buy the ingredients for the next week.

‘Nosh is a community food project that aims to get people involved in growing, preparing and eating good, inexpensive, healthy food and learning together how we can eat well on a budget,’ explained church development manager Philippa King.

It came about after the church looked into setting up a foodbank. However, with a good one already operating in Newham, and knowing many people with long-term food needs (foodbanks normally provide food for a short period to cover an emergency, but try to avoid a longer dependency), it started to think of something slightly different.

A café had been mooted several times as part of the church development project.

‘We began to look at how we could address the issue of long-term food poverty, and thought of this,’ added Philippa.

‘If we could grow something together, volunteer together and



make it good enough to attract others, it was worth a look.’

There is heritage, too: the church used to serve weekly lunches when the area began to receive lots of refugees.

This was called Nosh, and was set up by Elsie Lewis, who died in 2011. Gifts in her memory have been used to pay for a trained chef.

As well as volunteers learning food preparation skills as they work alongside the chef, weekly recipes are provided.

This Wednesday there was a free cooking workshop at 4pm in

the kitchen. A weekly gardening club is also planned.

Nosh at the moment is a six-week pilot project.

If it is successful, it could become a regular feature of the building once the next phase of repairs and restoration is complete.

‘We’ll have to evaluate costs to see if we can do it long-term once our building project has completed, but we’ve been encouraged so far,’ said Philippa.

‘Last week we had 55 people and sold every last scrap of food in the kitchen.’

## Church’s Diamond Jubilee party

A BAPTIST church in Yorkshire is looking for people celebrating 60 years – of anything – to a special jubilee event.

Whether it is marriage, life, or work, members of Gildersome Baptist Church have been inviting people who are celebrating 60 years to join them as guests of honour at their Diamond Jubilee Garden Party on June 3.

Already several have responded. Two who have been invited to Buckingham Palace during May have agreed to come to the Gildersome garden party as well.

The church is especially excited to have the niece and great nephew of the man who was the Herald Trumpeter at the Coronation as invited guests.

On the day there will be a full programme of activities including stories, games, quizzes, and a video of the Coronation.

‘Not everyone can make it all the way to one of the Queen’s Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace, so the church decided to arrange its own in Gildersome,’ explained minister the Revd David Newton.

‘Lots of places have street parties, but we felt that Gildersome deserves its own garden party. We’ve had a great response.’

## ‘Vote for the right candidate not the religious one’

A PROMINENT evangelical Egyptian pastor has warned his congregation against voting for purely protecting Christian interests in the presidential elections that began in the Middle East country this week.

Pastor Sameh Maurice of the large evangelical church Kasr El Doubara in Tahrir Square, Cairo said that Christians should vote for the best candidate for the whole country instead of one that may be perceived to be best at protecting Christians over a more Islamic candidate.

‘We should not allow fear to motivate us,’ he said. ‘Our choice has to be built on good thinking, seeking what is better for the future of the country.’

‘It is dangerous to think who would be good for us as Christians. We should think of who will be good for all Egyptians, remembering that we have one future, and when it is good, everyone will be blessed.’

‘We are seeking a person



who believes in democracy and freedom for everyone, someone who would treat all Egyptians equally regardless their religion.’ Pastor Sameh was speaking at the Sunday service, which was broadcast by BMS World Mission partner Sat 7.

His comments were in response to reports that many Christians will be voting for former President Mubarak’s last prime minister and former military commander Ahmed Shafiq to be president as he favours a more secular future for Egypt and would be more tolerant of Christians compared to more Islamic candidates.

Christians make up approximately 10 per cent of the Egyptian population with the majority Muslim.

## Tackling disability injustice

SIR ALEX Ferguson, Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Fatima Whitbread recently added their support to the Undeclared campaign and resource dealing with disability and justice.

Undeclared, developed by a partnership of Christian churches and agencies including BMS World Mission and the Baptist Union of Great Britain, seeks to challenge the unjust and unnecessary struggle faced by

disabled people throughout the world.

It seeks to harness the potential of the Paralympic Games to educate schools and churches.

It was introduced at the Baptist Assembly, and officially launched on Monday at the Palace of Westminster.

● [www.bmsworldmission.org/undeclared](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/undeclared)