

Baptist Steering Group - November 2017

This month, Baptist Steering Group (BSG) and All Team Leaders (ATLs) travelled to Paignton in Devon to meet in the South Western Baptist Association (SWBA).



This was a milestone as it meant BSG had visited all 13 Baptist Associations. We did this to briefly share in the life of each Association and listen to what God is doing in all parts of our family. As with the other 12 Associations, hearing local ministers share their story was energising and exciting, and we hope to convey some of that here. We also had five members of our Accompanying Group present to provide prayer, reflection and spiritual direction. This included having our past, present and future Presidents – what a blessing! Words given from God through our accompaniers provided reflective and prophetic insight to our discussions.



Our Accompanying Group. From left to right, Dave Gregory (President Elect), Daniel Hatfield (Rayleigh Baptist Church), Dianne Tidball (current President), Rupert Lazar (2016 President), Marjorie Allan (The Well, Sheffield).

You do not have the answers, you do have the first step

These words from Dianne Tidball, along with the session led by our 2016 President Rupert Lazar where he asked BSG to give thanks for the progress made in key areas this year, provided encouragement. We started the year knowing we needed to find answers to various issues, and would take steps to achieve this.

Marks of Ministry – Formation

Many positive steps have been taken this year to implement recommendations from the Ignite report. The marks of ministry for formation have been agreed as

Mature disciple of Christ

Accountable

Relational approach to leadership

Kingdom focused

Servant hearted and sacrificial.

The Colleges have been working closely with our Ministries Specialist

Team and are delighted this work is now complete. It will be implemented from September 2018.

Ministry Information Xchange

This has been a major project, moving all our confidential information held about ministers from paper to a very secure electronic format and solution. The Ministry Information Xchange will also allow us to work as one team, enabling appropriate information to be shared with Regional Ministers, Associations and Colleges.

Financial challenges

While we still have much work to do, significant steps have been taken this year with the financial challenges we face. Significantly we have a plan with regards the Defined Benefit Pension deficit. How we finance our Union through Home Mission and Subscriptions requires further work. As we enter 2018 we will be working on a new budgeting process which will enable a three-year plan. Home Mission for 2017 has not yet reached its target and churches will be reminded to check that they have sent their contribution. We were shown the final drafted Legacy Pack which will be sent to all churches next year. This will cover why Wills are important and why leaving a legacy to both Baptists Together and your local church could have far-reaching Kingdom impact. For a trial period, we will be offering a free Will writing service through the National Free Will Network, and instructions on how to access this will be included in the pack.

You may not know the whole picture - trust God

We met with **Murray Golder from 'Breathe Communities' pioneer ministry, Penzance**; **Luke Mansfield, Minister of Honiton Family Church**; **Chris Woodman, Minister of Lyme Regis Baptist Church**; and **Matt Noble, Minister of Truro Baptist Church**. Matt also mentors Karen and Murray Golder and oversees St Austell Baptist Church. Their stories were all very different, yet they all had common themes. God had challenged a heart of generosity and a deep trust that he would guide in ways yet to be revealed. Lyme Regis Baptist Church have become a recognised eco church and are in the process of creating a new project call 'The Driftwood'. Truro Baptist Church are now a networked church, taking covenant very seriously. Karen and Murray Golder are in the community for the community, facilitating creative ways to enable a relationship with Jesus.



BSG praying for Chris, Luke, Murray and Matt

If you build it he will come

This well-known line from the film *Field of Dreams* has become very important to Lyme Regis Baptist Church and is one we can all reflect on. If Baptists Together focus on building mission opportunities God will come and work in incredible ways. There is so much support and resourcing available that all we need is to take that first step. During our time, the Baptist Insurance Company met with our Regional Ministry Team Leaders and explained how they want to use their profits to enable mission. **Churches have an opportunity right now to do this and may be eligible for a small grant.**

**“SEE, I AM DOING A NEW THING!
NOW IT SPRINGS UP;
DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT?”
ISAIAH 43:19**



As our time came to a close, words from Philipians gave us confidence to step into 2018

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

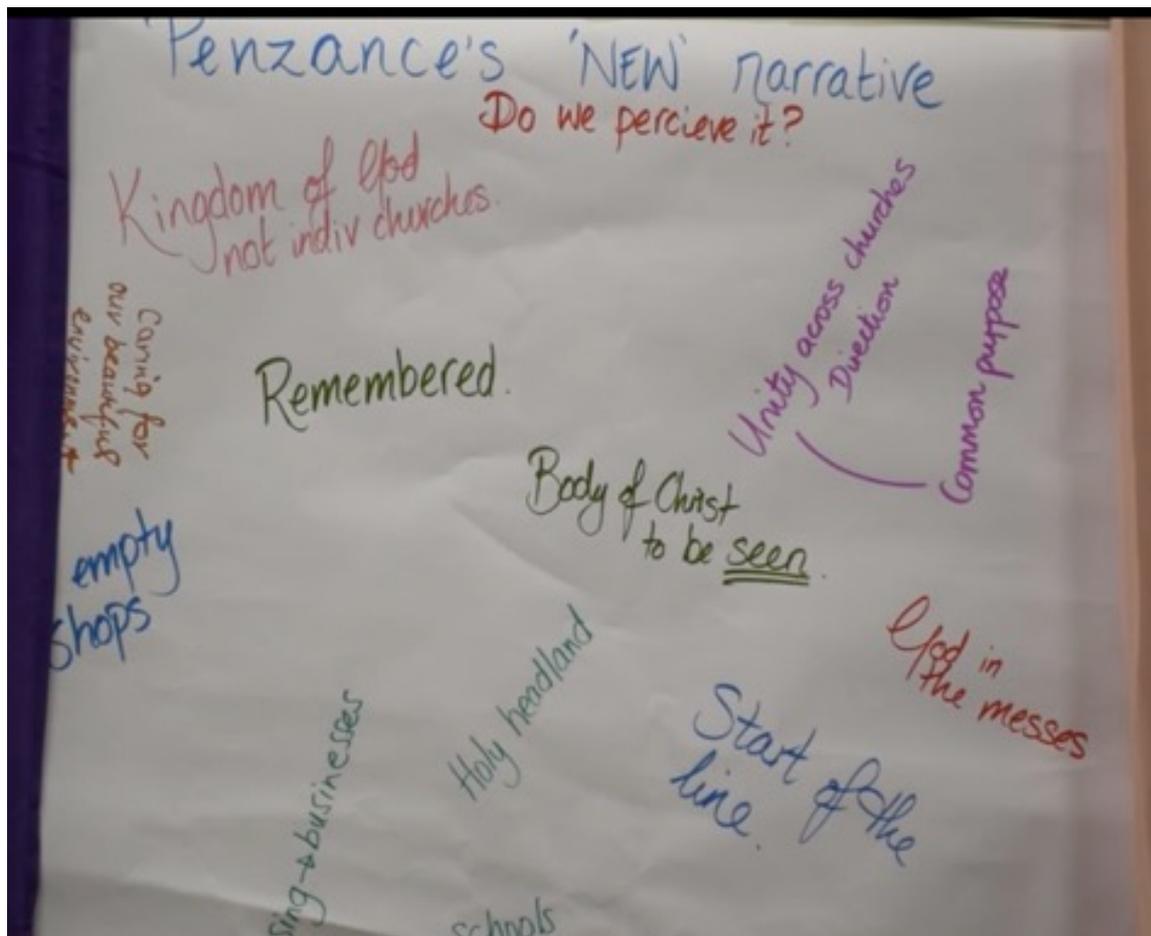
Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society Team Leader

Please share this update with your church.

'Breathe Communities' pioneer ministry & Matt Noble, Minister of Truro Baptist Church

- Covenant relationship has developed between Truro, Breathe Communities and St Austell Baptist Church
- Challenged to be generous with gifts
- 'It is all new and feels good'

Home Mission supported Karen and Murray Golder moved down to the South West to start a pioneering mission. They began by asking the question 'what is relevant in Penzance?'. They started with schools and families, then school leavers and millennials. Each time it was good to try and connections were made, but it wasn't quite right. So, they stopped and started praying into what God's vision was.



During this time, they connected with Matt Noble, minister of Truro Baptist Church and a strong friendship and partnership begun to develop. It is a commitment of the South West Baptist Association to intentionally support pioneer ministries. Following a really successful 24/7 prayer event in Penzance, God answered prayer for a way forward and an unexpected opportunity arose.

In a busy shopping centre in Penzance, one of the shop units was kept intentionally as a Christian presence. This space was becoming free and all the local churches had been asked if they wanted it; the answer had been 'no' until they finally asked Karen and Murray.

'Breathe Communities' is being born as a creative space, giving people an opportunity to encounter God through creativity and grow spiritually. It aims to provide crossover with how we access God. It will be re-purposed next year and open in September. It is in the community and for the community. [Watch their latest video here.](#)

A prophetic painting was put together on a trial evening supported by Truro Baptist Church a - white lighthouse, pathway, and angels' wings. This was also reflected in words the Lord gave to individuals, so is important for the future. For further information and the latest news, [visit their Facebook page.](#)



Matt also oversees St Austell Baptist Church. It has been an interesting journey for Matt and Truro Baptist Church. God spoke to them about being generous in all the ways God gifts us. The journey started four

years ago when Matt started moderating at St Austell, and this progressed to him taking on his current role there in September 2016. At the same time, Murray and Karen were getting in touch saying they were coming to the South West. There was no structure or clear vision of where this was heading.



Matt was very challenged **by an article on covenant in the *Baptists Together* magazine by Lynn Green**. He recognised that we can't simply say we are in a covenantal relationship, it has meant something, and this means it may also cost something too. This was confirmed in a conversation with Murray and Karen.

As a church they recognised they needed to commit to journeying together with St Austell Baptist Church and walk with Murray and Karen. Matt now works 40% at St Austell with the aim to build a team. He has been released to do that.

They are starting to see the strength in this three-way team. They come together each month in worship and seek God's presence and support one another

'It is all new and feels good'.

Honiton Family Church

- Transformational change
- Acts 17 approach to mission
- Now planning major conference for 2018

This church has undergone a transformational change. Their minister Luke arrived in 2013 and the church said they knew they were dying and needed to change. There were 27 people in the church, most of them over 70. That was a shock to Luke and the family as they were used to a larger, younger church, but the call was there.

Acts 17:23

For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.



Paul's approach in Acts 17 is what Luke has used. They listened and looked at their local community. They started a kids club and this grew over time. Luke's own children were small so they started a toddler group. Luke's wife is a natural evangelist and they have avoided the normal difficulties churches have with toddler groups. Key to this each year is the graduation service for all the children moving on to school. This a special service in church.

As the church began to grow, Luke asked the church 'are we prepared for the disruption that these new relationships will bring?' The answer was yes.



This wasn't about doing things that church 'do' but praying and reflecting carefully and looking for opportunities.

One of these is Pub church on a Sunday once a month. A local Pub didn't open on Sunday and they could use it for free.

Luke is passionate about sport and men's ministry and they have football team. Sport is a great way to spread the Gospel. These conversations have happened for Luke in the pub after the game. They also have a 'Nerf night' for younger people.



Church began to grow and baptisms started to happen and soon the question was asked 'what is the next step?' So they moved to a local school with significant space and opportunity.



Next year they are taking on another new initiative and running a large conference, 'The Encounter Conference' - three days of life changing worship, teaching and ministry.

'Come join the adventure' is their invitation.

Lyme Regis Baptist Church

- A recognised eco-church
- A desire to reach out to youth and young adults has resulted in a new project called 'The Driftwood'
- 'if you build it he will come'...

Chris Woodman, Minister of Lyme Regis Baptist Church shares two remarkable ways God has challenged and guided them, and his daughters have played a key role.

Colossians 1:16

for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - all things have been created through him and for him.



Being the one Baptist community in Dorset in the World Heritage Site of Lyme Regis, they are church that have taken very seriously a

commitment to becoming an eco-church. Having a deacon who is a well-known botanist and a daughter who was studying a Human Geography degree, God's plan began to take shape. She made the links with green theology and when her University suggested doing a survey relating faith to environmentalism for her dissertation she jumped at the opportunity.

This led to the church taking on a recognised way they could measure their environmental commitment. A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world. **They were the first Baptist church to get their silver eco award** and they are working towards their gold. Among other things, they have considered their energy supplier, carbon footprint, cleaning supplies and consumables as well as theology. They have recognised the debate is still there and have been questioning everything. What role does creation play now in terms of understanding the future hope of New Creation?

Chris's other daughter trained in youth work at a Christian training centre, which involved a placement in an indoor Christian skate park. One afternoon towards the end of her course, she found herself with some friends in an outdoor skate park in the local area.



On one of the ramps one phrase in graffiti deeply affected her – 'What if God doesn't care'. God spoke profoundly to her through this, eventually

leading her back to Lyme Regis with a desire to reach out to youth and young adults. This has emerged as a new project called 'The Driftwood'.



The vision is for the creation of an attractive, well equipped, contemporary space through the refurbishment of the church's room used for weekly coffee mornings.

The desire was to create a space in which people would love to spend time, where relationships could thrive and grow through a variety of activities - a space where the love of God and good news of

the Gospel is manifest. The congregation wholly supported this and provided much of the finance. Now nearing its completion, it has attracted the attention of people both local and beyond, creating a great sense of excitement and anticipation.

The work has been spurred on over the year as a number of people experiencing the progress have all quite independently found themselves quoting a phrase from the film 'Field of Dreams':

'if you build it he will come'

