



Ministers' Conference 2026

02 Welcome
Ministers'
Conference report

03 Thrive
Ainon Baptist Church

04 Meet Rhiannon
Prayer Diary

SWBA NEWS!

South Wales
Baptist Association

Spring 2026 >>>

‘Slow Wisdom’ and ‘a New Day for Baptists in Wales’

In February around 70 ministers, chaplains and pioneers from across SWBA and BUW met together for our ministers' conference at Waterfront Community Church in Swansea

Leading Bible studies on both mornings was Arnallt Morgan, pastor at Waterfront Church. Ruth Moriarty, Baptist Minister at Christ Church New Southgate & Friern Barnet in London explored the concept of ‘Slow Wisdom’ in the context of the church meeting.

Seminar titles included: ‘Self Care in Pastoral Practice’; ‘Empowering Others’ and exploring ‘The Far Right and the Church’. Speakers were from BMS, Cardiff Baptist College and Ministry Leads from BUW and BUGB.

For her doctorate Ruth researched how churches discern together. A key Baptist principle is believers meeting together to discern the mind of Christ: *'Too often churches end up arguing about teacups rather than discerning the mission of God together at the Church Meeting,'* she said.

The value of ‘slow wisdom’ is giving space to listen to each other and to God. This allows ideas to grow, develop, be refined and tested within the community. A healthy process includes prayer, testing of consensus, listening and prophetic participation.

(Continued on Page 2)



Ruth Moriarty shares about ‘Slow Wisdom’

“Now I say to you that you are Peter... upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.” Matthew 16:18

Welcome!

Over recent weeks the report by the Bible Society “Quiet Revival” has been called into question. This 2025 report challenged the idea of the continued decline of Christianity. YouGov, who carried out the survey, have admitted full responsibility for errors and apologised.



Experts began to question the findings because they are based on one survey that took place online and the results seem to be out of step with other data. It was only in March of this year that YouGov admitted that some of the underlying data was found to be flawed and can no longer be relied on as a reliable source of information.

We may sigh and feel discouraged and disappointed. After all, this was this survey that offered hope of a new wave of people becoming Christians, especially amongst the younger generations. But a survey that is discredited doesn't tell the whole story. As I have the privilege of travelling around Baptist churches in South Wales I hear again and again the stories of people coming to faith and being baptised. Colleagues from England are reporting similar trends.

Each year we ask churches in membership with the Baptist Union of Great Britain to do an annual return. This is our own survey of what is going on across our churches. Our figures tell us that church membership increased last year. In 2024 Baptisms reached a ten-year high. In 2025 they have gone up again. In South Wales we had 136 reported Baptisms in 2024. Last year that figure jumped to 201. Praise God!!!! He is at work in our midst!

And we shouldn't be surprised by this. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus explicitly promises in response to Peter's declaration of faith that Jesus is the Messiah, that, “on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”. There may be different interpretations on ‘what’ or ‘who’ ‘the rock’ refers to, but Jesus is the one who builds His church!

Whatever the statistics may say we can hold on to this promise of Jesus – He is building His Church. And what is even more exciting is that we are invited to partner with Him. What a privilege... and what a responsibility that is.

Mark

Ministers' Conference



Relaxing over food...

(Continued from Page 1)

In the first Bible Study, Arnallt encouraged us by sharing that we may be ‘witnessing the dawn of a new day in the church’. Across many places there are signs of renewed spiritual hunger, particularly amongst the younger generation who are searching for purpose and meaning – some are discovering their answer in Christ.

He used the story of Nehemiah as a powerful picture of what a new day can look like. The situation looked bleak in Nehemiah's time when the rebuilding of the wall began and opposition followed. In every generation there are voices saying that the church is finished but history tells us a different story – Jesus continues to build his church.

Rebuilding the walls was not easy and a lot of rubble had to be removed. What had once been useful now became an obstacle. The foundation did not need replacing but some things needed removing so the work could continue. We all need to work together as we have the privilege in sharing in Christ's work in this time.

All in all, a great conference and we are already looking forward to 2027!



Roles for the team were varied!

We would love to hear from you if you have a story to share about baptisms or testimony of how God is at work in your church or missional community.

OUR VALUES

- Passionate for Mission
- Innovative and Visionary

- Generous and Relational
- Committed to Justice

Supporting those who are hurting...



Life can be very painful and this is true whether or not you are a Christian. Aion Baptist Church in Tongwynlais are using two initiatives to help support people in these difficult moments.

GraveTalk offers a gentle, welcoming space for those affected by bereavement or exploring if

there is more to life than this. Held on Saturday mornings, the sessions provide hospitality, conversation, and small group discussion in a calm and caring environment. Many who attend have found it to be a place of real healing. They have run the course twice and minister, Phil Lloyd (pictured above) simply describes the impact as 'Remarkable'.

Alongside this, **Restored Lives** supports those experiencing separation or divorce. Meeting over several weeks, the course creates space for people to share their stories and begin to rebuild. While the early sessions can be emotionally intense as people speak of their pain, the transformation over time is striking. Phil says, "It's been a real honour and a real privilege to be part of people's journeys and to help them along the path they're on."

Both ministries highlight the importance of compassionate church communities—places that recognise life's challenges and offer love, support, and hope. It isn't unusual for people not only to find healing, but also to rediscover faith and reconnect with church.



Thrive: Connection, Support and Shared Understanding

What is Thrive, and why does it matter? In a recent conversation with Karen Kaneen, Bill Carpenter, Jane Brownutt, and Jennifer Evans shared how Thrive is making a difference in the lives of ministers' spouses.

At its heart, Thrive is about connection. Whether through informal lunches, coffee meet-ups, or a simple WhatsApp message, it creates space for supportive, low-key fellowship. As Jennifer explains, it's often in these everyday moments that people feel able to share prayer needs, concerns, or encouragement.

What makes Thrive unique is its shared understanding. Ministers' spouses often face challenges that others may not fully relate to. Thrive offers a confidential and compassionate environment where people can speak openly, knowing others "get it."



Jane highlights how this creates immediate empathy and deep connection, especially during difficult seasons.

The Thrive Conference is a particular highlight.



Thrive Steering Group

Combining worship, teaching, and time to relax, it provides opportunities to reconnect with old friends and build new relationships. Many value the space it creates for deeper conversations and mutual encouragement.

Thrive is also a place of mutual support. As Bill noted, even those who feel they are coping well have an important role to play in supporting others. This sense of shared journey strengthens trust and community.

In a busy and often isolating role, Thrive offers something simple but vital: friendship, understanding, and prayer. It is a reminder that no one in ministry life needs to walk alone.



If you would like to support Home Mission, please scan the QR code or go to:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/631022/Making_a_donation.aspx

Rhiannon is the new Women's Ministry Advisor for SWBA



Rhiannon

Rhiannon Francis, Minister at Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Caerphilly, is working with the Association in a voluntary capacity to undertake the role of 'Women in Ministry Pastoral Care and Development Lead'.

The appointment is our response to the call from the leaders of Project Violet for every Association to appoint a Women's Ministry Advisor. Project Violet is a research project set up with the aim of gaining a clearer understanding of the theological, missional, and structural obstacles women ministers face in the Baptist community in England and Wales. As an Association we want to support all ministers and everyone exploring a call to ministry. Such people are a gift to us. We recognise that women may experience challenges where they would value talking with another woman in ministry and this is where this new role becomes important.

Rhiannon says: *What a title! But what does it mean? Maybe it would be easier to say what I can offer... a listening ear, hearing and recognising some of the difficulties and struggles many women in Ministry, and those discerning their calling to Ministry*

sometimes encounter. I can help support those who have often had limitations put on them and their Ministry, just because they are women. I can support those women in our Churches who are sensing a call to Ministry, and what that might look like. I can be there, to listen, support, encourage and come alongside women who may be facing any struggles in their Ministry. I can try to connect women in Ministry in their local areas, so that they can support one another as they experience all the joys and challenges of Ministry.

Prayer Diary...

Each week we pray for an Association Church, asking for God's blessing on them and fruitfulness for the sake of the Kingdom. Any more specific prayers requests for their week, will be shared through the E-news.

5 th April	Calvary BC, Canton
12 th April	Canton Uniting Church
19 th April	Carmel BC, Llanharan
26 th April	Carmel BC, Ferndale
3 rd May	Castleton BC
10 th May	Central BC, Tredegar
17 th May	Chepstow BC
24 th May	Christ Church English BC Aberdare
31 st May	Christchurch United, Cardiff
7 th June	Coedpenmaen Community
14 th June	Corporation Rd BC, Newport
21 st June	Cowbridge United Free Church
28 th June	Crane Street Church, Pontypool



Rhiannon's role does not replace the work of Mark and Rob as Regional Ministers. They continue to be available to both women and men who are in ministry or exploring a call to ministry. But this is seen as an important addition to what the Association already offers.

Mark says: *"We are delighted that Rhiannon has made herself available for this role. Whilst Rob and I are always pleased to support where we can, we do recognise that there are times when a female may appreciate the opportunity to speak to another female minister. We are grateful that several women Regional Ministers have also made themselves available to speak to women outside of their geographical responsibility. However, in Rhiannon we have someone local which makes meeting face-to-face much easier. As an Association we continue to take seriously the findings of Project Violet and want to commit to doing what we can to support women who are in ministry and those sensing God's call on their lives".*

For more stories across South Wales Baptist Association, please do see our website and follow us on Facebook and YouTube.

www.swba.org.uk