

Newbury Baptist Church

# weekly news

2nd October

## DARK NIGHTS; BRIGHT LIGHTS

Somehow we've already reached October! How has that happened? I'm sure the Summer holidays only started a couple of weeks ago!

Time marches on, and we move into a month where the nights really start to draw in, and things get noticeably darker. So it's a good job October is also the month of our Light Party, hence the neon theme to the Weekly News.

If you haven't registered your child yet, then I urge you to do so - it's one of the highlights of the year, and a brilliant, positive alternative to Halloween. It's also the perfect event for your children to invite their friends along.

This month we are also giving thanks for our oldest musical instrument; the organ, with a special Songs of Praise style service on Saturday 12th.

It is perhaps apt that in a month of seasonal change, we say goodbye to something which has provided a focal point for Sunday worship for many decades, but in recent times has found itself used far less often, as worship styles and the availability and skillset of musicians has changed.

We will all have our own opinions and preferences when it comes to the choice of hymns and the way they are played and sung; this is nothing new in church life!

The use of instruments, namely the organ, was a controversial topic following the reformation in the 16th

Century, as early protestants sought to distinguish themselves from Roman Catholic worship.

Even the great 19th Century Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon did not want an organ in his church, viewing it as a distraction, and preferring songs sung a cappella. (I dread to think what he'd have made of drums, guitars, mixing desks and big screens!)

There is also a rich history of congregations complaining about new songs! One famous letter to a pastor reads: "What is wrong with the inspiring hymns with which we grew up? When I go to church it is to worship God, not be distracted with learning a new hymn. Last Sunday's was particularly unnerving. The tune was un-singable and the new harmonies were quite distorting."

The letter was written in 1890. The hymn? *"What A Friend We Have in Jesus."*

It is probably a good thing that the Bible does not give us instruction on what style or instruments to use in worship. Culture has always influenced practice and style, and culture is always changing. The challenge is navigating through this in a way which encourages all to seek Jesus first and foremost. Thankfully we have a team of excellent musicians and thoughtful worship leaders to help us at NBC.

In times of change, it can be comforting to know that those who have gone before us have also experienced similar feelings. And as with the changing seasons, through it all, God remains faithful, and his promises remain unchanged.

Peter

# CHURCH NEWS

## MEN'S BREAKFAST: SATURDAY 5TH OCTOBER

This will be the last Men's Breakfast before the Autumn Budget, so come along now before Rachel Reeves' sausage tax increases the price of your breakfast by £28bn!

Our speaker will be Nigel Billington, who will share something of his journey under the sea and upon the land. Do join us! Bookings can be made [here](#).

## LADIES BREAKFAST: SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER

We're really delighted that Maxie Heppell has agreed to be our guest speaker at the next Ladies' Breakfast.

Maxie and her husband Emil moved to Newbury from South Africa in 2019 and attended NBC until 2023 when Maxie's new job meant they moved to Poole in Dorset.

In her spare time Maxie is a Christian author, shares a weekly blog with her followers and enjoys speaking at women's conferences across the country. Her most recent book is "Grace Period: Hope in cancer, infertility, vision loss and fibromyalgia".

So do put the date in the diary... and come ready to be blessed, encouraged and inspired!

Please book your place [here](#) so we can cater accordingly.

## HARVEST & VOLUNTEER SUNDAY: 6TH OCTOBER

Our Harvest service will take place this Sunday 6th October, and will include a collection for the Newbury Foodbank. There will be a time to bring your food offerings to the front during the service.

We will be exploring the theme of 'giving', including the giving of our time. As part of this, there will be an opportunity to think about serving God in various ways in church. A number of our groups are looking for new volunteers, and will be on hand after the service to talk about what helping in their group involves.

## ORGAN CELEBRATION SERVICE: SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER, 2PM

A number of our past and present organists will be joining us to play a selection of favourite traditional hymns in an hour-long service on Saturday 12th October at 2pm.

This will be followed by tea and cakes in the Foyer.

## LIGHT PARTY, 31ST OCTOBER: BOOK NOW!

The Light Party will be returning on 31st October, 5-6:30pm, for a fun evening of games, crafts, food and stories. This is for all children in primary school (reception - year 6).

Online booking is now open, and invitations are available for children to give to their friends.

You can book on our website [here](#).

# VOLUNTEER MONTH

As part of our Harvest service we will be thinking about how we use and give our time to God. There are lots of ways of serving God in NBC, and a number of our groups are currently looking for volunteers as they seek to grow the various ministries of the church. Throughout October's Weekly News we will feature various groups and areas where you might be able to serve. This will include a contact person and email if you would like to express an interest in finding out more or would like to sign up to a rota.

## GIGGLES & WIGGLES EXTRA HELP

The building works in the hall are starting very soon and one of the main groups that will be affected during this time is Giggles and Wiggles. This is a really important outreach to families in the community and it's important this continues while the work takes place.

It will temporarily be held in the main church while the hall work is carried out which presents some logistical challenges.

We are in need of volunteers to help with both setting up the church ready for Giggles and Wiggles and preparing the church again for Sunday services. Set up will take place after the service on Sunday morning and will involve stacking the chairs at the side of the church and setting up some tables, chairs and mats ready for Friday morning. Preparing the church for Sunday will only involve putting the chairs back in the correct rows. This could be done any time between Friday lunchtime or Saturday evening depending on availability, and we can arrange access to the church if necessary.

Could you help out in either of these areas so Giggles and Wiggles can continue to run? If so, please email [sarahm@newburybaptistchurch.org](mailto:sarahm@newburybaptistchurch.org) or speak to Sarah on Sunday. Thanks.

## PRAYER ROTA

We each occupy different places where we encounter situations & people in need of God. We are a diverse church with a wide reach, and therefore our prayer needs are equally wide-ranging.

One of the key things we are called to do when we gather together is to pray. The prayers of the gathered body of Christ are particularly powerful, and we would like to encourage more people to participate in this part of our Sunday services in particular.

If you're looking for an activity to get you tuned in to God then I would urge you to sign up for the prayer rota. The process of writing a prayer for the Sunday service makes you concentrate on the things that are on your heart. It's an opportunity to speak to God about the topics that he wants us to pray as a church. You can base your prayer on the passage that we will be studying that Sunday or get inspiration from nature, the news, current affairs, life experiences, charity work. If we get to hear from a variety of people as a church we will be tuned in to a wider range of issues.

If you've never done this before, but are a little nervous about doing so, I would love to help and encourage you. If you're interested in signing up then please email or speak to me:

[Jol@newburybaptistchurch.org](mailto:Jol@newburybaptistchurch.org)



# Prayer Space

## PEOPLE FOR PRAYER

Please lift up before God the following people in our church family who are in particular need of our prayers and support:

- **Beryl R**
- **Joy & Brian C**
- **Barbara M & family**
- **Joyce & Gordon S**
- **Jonathan E**

*Lord, we lift up our brothers and sisters before you today. Some we know well, some we know a little, but all we know are loved and known by you. Meet their needs, we pray, and remind them of your ongoing presence in their lives. Amen.*

## NBC OVERSEAS

We pray for the following who are serving God overseas:

- **'Arthur & Reeta'**: As they serve God in a politically sensitive part of the world. Pray for the projects they are working on, and for God's continued provision and protection over them.
- **Bethan C**: Bethan has settled into life in South Africa, and continues to work with Operation Mobilisation as part of their REACH training programme. Pray for her as she considers her long term future.
- **The Mahon Family**: Our BMS Link Partners in Peru. For their most recent update, please see the Weekly News on 11th September.

## PRAYER FOCUS THIS WEEK

This week the war between Israel and Palestine escalated to involving Lebanon and Iran. We commit ourselves to praying for this volatile part of the world.

Almighty God, your Son, Jesus, is called the Prince of Peace, and it is in his name we bring you our prayers, asking for peace in the Middle East. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers:

We bring before you the complexities of that troubled region, with religious, historical, and geographical tensions which have once again boiled over into war and killing. We recognise that this is not a case of 'right v wrong', and pray for wisdom from the international community as it considers who to support and how to broker peace.

We pray for the thousands of families who are grieving the loss of loved ones, and who have been made homeless by bombs, rockets and bullets. In their devastation and grief, may they reach out to you and be comforted by your embrace.

In our own sense of helplessness, might you make us peace makers and peace bringers into whichever context we find ourselves, that we might reflect the hope that comes from our faith in the Prince of Peace. Amen.