

Weekly News

NEWBURY BAPTIST CHURCH

16TH APRIL 2025

Reflections on Holy Week

Only a few days ago we celebrated Palm Sunday, and reflected upon the expectations the crowd had upon Jesus as he entered Jerusalem, as well as our own expectations of Jesus today. When do our expectations align with God's plan and promises? When do they differ?

Holy Week tends to go a little quiet after that, and only starts to build momentum again on Wednesday (Today). This is the point in the gospels where Judas agrees to betray Jesus. In some Christian traditions it's known as *Spy Wednesday*, which I think adds to the drama.

Judas' actions stand in stark contrast to those of the woman who anoints Jesus with expensive perfume in the home of Simon the Leper. I don't think it's a coincidence that Matthew weaves these stories alongside each other in his gospel account (ch 26). They highlight the growing tensions around following Christ and not only understanding his teachings, but embracing and following them.

"When the disciples saw this, they were indignant," writes Matthew (26:8). If I stop and think about how I'd feel if I was one of those disciples, indignant at someone worshipping Jesus, I'm embarrassed and ashamed. Yet how often do I misunderstand what Jesus is trying to teach me, while dismissing others because they worship and engage with Christ differently? The truth is probably more often than I'd care to admit.

I think there is a fear among many Christians of not wanting our faith to cause us to stand out or do anything which might draw attention to ourselves. Of course, some of this is perfectly reasonable and understandable. Our natural characters and dispositions. The culture of the church we attend. Perhaps negative experiences in the past.

But as we engage with the various characters and their actions in Holy Week, I think it's remarkable that the few whose actions are commended by Jesus are the ones willing to stand up and stick out. The woman with the expensive perfume. The women at the foot of the cross. The criminal who professes faith in Christ whilst crucified alongside him. In contrast, those who maybe should've known better - namely the disciples - are repeatedly found wanting. Then there is the crowd, whose fickleness ultimately condemns the man they had celebrated days earlier.

This isn't necessarily a call to more charismatic expressions of worship, or dramatic displays of faith. But it is a reminder that the difference between these two groups is that one had their eyes completely fixed upon Jesus, and didn't allow the fear of being different or standing out to stop them engaging with him, and in turn having their faith strengthened and rewarded.

May we keep our eyes firmly fixed on Christ over these next few days.

Peter

Notice board

Holy Week & Easter Services

We hope you're able to join us as we journey through Holy Week through to Easter Sunday:

Maundy Thursday - 7.30pm at NBC - with Thatcham Baptist Church

Good Friday - 10.30am, St Nic's Church - CTNA service

Easter Sunday - 10am, all-age service at NBC

Deacons Elections

Deacon elections are planned for the church AGM on Sunday May 11th. None of the current deacons are stepping down, but we are able to have a maximum of 12 deacons and have 9 in post at the moment. If you would like to discuss the role, please speak to Peter or one of the deacons.

Nominations must be submitted to Neal (Church Secretary) by the end of Easter Sunday, 20th April please - via email: churchsecretary@newburybaptistchurch.org.

First Aid Courses

We have arranged two basic first aid courses for leaders of groups with the intention that if enough are trained, it is likely that there will be a trained first aider at most NBC events. Having booked everyone, we have some spare places on both dates, so would like to offer it to other church members. There is no charge to attendees. The sessions run from 9.30-3 on either the 26th April or 17th May at church. You will need to bring your own packed lunch, and wear comfortable clothing. Please book online for your preferred date: [26 April](#) or [17 May](#).

Hall Update

We took advantage of it being the Easter school holidays and have had more work on the church hall completed this week. The floors have been sanded and varnished, bringing out their natural charm and creating a modern, welcoming space in the hall (and the white lines have gone too!). It looks fantastic and brings building project one step closer to being complete. The finishing touch will be the installation of the partition, which is currently on order and due to be fitted in May. Once in place, sound panels will be able to be specified and ordered too.



DO YOU HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?
EMAIL: OFFICE@NEWBURYBAPTISTCHURCH.ORG

Prayer Space



Spy Wednesday Prayer

Dear Lord,

Today we remember how Judas broke his friendship with you.

We pray for those who have fallen out with family or friends and who feel it is too late to mend.

Help them to find the courage, patience and wisdom they need to re-connect and make amends.

May I be witness of your love to others, by showing love and care, and help them to know your great love for them. Amen.

Maundy Thursday Prayer

Lord we thank you for the fellowship we share with your people throughout the world as we remember the last meal Jesus ate with his disciples. Let your church follow his example of love and service so that his message of salvation might reach those around us.

Holy God, source of all love, on this night of his betrayal, Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment: To love one another as he had loved them. We pray you, by your Holy Spirit to write this commandment in our hearts. Help us serve as Jesus served, to be unafraid to offer ourselves for the sake of others.

Lord we pray for all those who today, like your people in Egypt long ago, are oppressed and treated unjustly by those in power who abuse their authority. We pray that arrogance and cruelty may give way to humility and a kindness that seeks not to crush but to serve and nurture the weak and vulnerable.

Lord we pray for our families and friends and for the communities in which we live and work. We thank you for the celebrations and festivals which we share together. Help us also to look outwards and to care for those who are on the fringes of our society and excluded from our communities. Amen

Good Friday Prayer

Dear God, We remember today, the pain and suffering of the cross, and all that Jesus was willing to endure, so we could be set free. He paid the price, such a great sacrifice, to offer us the gift of eternal life.

Help us never to take for granted this huge gift of love on our behalf. Help us to be reminded of the cost of it all. Forgive us for being too busy, or distracted by other things, for not fully recognising what you freely given, what you have done for us.

Thank you, Lord, that by your wounds we are healed. Thank you that because of your sacrifice we can live free. Thank you that sin and death have been conquered and that your Power is everlasting.

Thank you that we can say with great hope, "It is finished..." For we know what's still to come. And death has lost its sting. We praise you for you are making all things new. Amen.

Church Family Prayers

Please pray for the following in our church family:

Those sailing at Venturers camp this week

Audrey & Brian

John P

Brian C and family

Beryl R

Jeanette H

Mary H

Nigel B

Jonathan E

Naomi in the Middle East

Arthur & Reeta in Asia

The Mahon Family in Peru