

# Weekly News

30<sup>th</sup> September 2026



80-year-old Mr Brown used to seek me out each Sunday at church to find out how my week had been. During the summer he used to slip me an envelope with some money in it to fund a week or so on Beach Mission in various places in the country. Barry and Judy used to invite me to help them, both on Beach Mission and at an Easter Holiday club (held at Sian's home church). I was a young teenager at the time.

These people invested time in me over several years, encouraging me, providing opportunities for me to grow in my faith and pass this faith along. I now look back with huge admiration and thankfulness for their interest and encouragement.

I wonder if you could provide similar interest and encouragement, maybe in a quiet way finding one of our young people and asking about their week and how their relationship with God has been in the last week. I am sure they will in the future look back and recognise God working through you in their lives.

We have a great bunch of young people attending NBC both in the morning for Spotlight and the evening for Ignite. This year has seen around an additional 7 or so Year 7 boys join us in these 2 groups. They are full of enthusiasm, fun and a willingness to learn about God from both the leaders and our older young people. If you have keen eyes, you will have seen some of these older teens more regularly in the church service.

Some of them have also started a 6-week course looking at the foundations of Christian leadership, a course created by Youthscape specifically for young people. The material we are going through brings some interesting discussions, and I think both the young people and the leaders alike are learning from this course. These same young people plus a few others had already been taking on some leadership of Prayer groups and peer group encouragement within the last couple of years of Ignite.

Both groups are looking forward to the annual youth weekend away, which we are busy preparing for, to be held towards the end of October. Please pray for both the leaders and our young people already, that our hearts and minds would be prepared to meet with God, as well as have some great fun and food over that weekend. We are hoping that this year's weekend will at least meet the high expectations set by previous years.

Please look out for a couple of our leaders that will be approaching you to pray for a specific person (leader or young person). It's essential to cover the weekend in prayer.

*Simon*



# QUESTIONING JESUS

SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO ASK A QUESTION



**I am thoroughly enjoying reading your questions and thinking and researching my replies. Please keep them coming! This week the question picks up on something I discussed on Sunday, so if you missed it (or dozed off), then this is for you!**

**Q: What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and why is it unforgivable?**

This is a question based around words of Jesus in Mark 3: 28-30.

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus says, “people will be forgiven their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.”

I said on Sunday that whenever this passage is read in church or in a small group, someone is always worried they’ve committed this apparently unforgivable offence. So let’s take a closer look.

First, notice how Jesus starts. He doesn't open with the exception. He opens with a huge promise: people will be forgiven their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter. That’s the headline.

So what does Jesus mean? Verse 30 tells us the scribes had been saying Jesus had an unclean spirit. They’d seen Jesus healing people, setting them free, pronouncing forgiveness. And they said that was the work of the devil. That is the sin.

It helps to see where Mark puts this story. He sandwiches it between two scenes with Jesus' own family. In verse 21 they come to take him home, because people are saying he's out of his mind. That's hardly a vote of confidence either. But look at the difference. His family are confused. The scribes are hostile. And by the end of the chapter, Jesus is still holding the door open to anyone who'll come and do God's will.

So this sin isn’t just failing to see God at work. It’s looking at the Holy Spirit setting someone free, and calling it evil. Mark’s wording suggests it’s a settled stance, not an accidental slip of the tongue.

Why can't it be forgiven? Not because God's mercy runs out. It's the Spirit who draws us to Jesus and brings us forgiveness. If someone insists that work is the devil's, they’ve shut the only door forgiveness comes through, and locked it from the inside. God isn't refusing them. They’re refusing him. Augustine said something similar: the unforgivable sin is a heart that refuses to repent, right to the end.

Think about who was forgiven elsewhere in the Bible. Peter, on the night Jesus was arrested, swore and cursed and said he'd never known him (Mark 14:71). Jesus restored him (John 21:15-19). Paul describes himself as having been a blasphemer and a persecutor of the church (1 Timothy 1:13). He was forgiven too. Whatever you're afraid you've said, it's unlikely to be worse than that.

So if you're worried you might have done it, that's the strongest sign you haven't. Someone whose heart is hardened against God doesn't lose sleep over it. Your worry is evidence the Spirit is still at work in you.

# Notices



## Church Barn Dance

A last call for the Harvest Barn Dance this Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October at 6pm. Please book your place [here](#) if you haven't already done so!

## Harvest

We will celebrate Harvest on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October in church, and will be collecting items for West Berkshire Foodbank. Please bring along donations of tinned/dried food or toiletries and household products. For a list of the Foodbank's most urgently needed items, [see their website](#)

## CAP Money Coaching

CAP Money coaching is a free service designed to empower you with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to better manage your finances. It is a free course open to all. Wednesdays, 10am-12pm on 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October. Book online [here](#). Contact David Clark or Helen Andrews for further info.

## CTNA Joint Service

Join in with others from churches in Newbury on 18<sup>th</sup> October for a joint service to conclude the UK National Week of Prayer. The service will be held at St Nicolas Church at 6pm.

## NBC Bake Off

NBC's popular Bake Off is back! Bake a cake and bring it along on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Our very own Prue Leith and Paul Hollywood will judge and award prizes! All donations will go to Newbury Street Pastors. Each cake must have a completed entry form including a list of ingredients. Please collect from church.

## Light Party

Come dressed as your favourite toy and have a Rootin' Tootin' Good Time at our Toy-Story themed Light Party on 31<sup>st</sup> October (5-6.30pm). There will be a disco, craft, games and food. Places are free but must be booked in advance [here](#).

If you're able to help supervise crafts, cook some hotdogs, join the prayer team or be part of the clean up crew for half an hour or so after the party finishes please sign up [here](#). For more information contact Sian

## NBC Youth Weekend

The 5th Annual NBC Youth Weekend Away is nearly here – 23<sup>rd</sup>–25<sup>th</sup> October 2026 – and we are excited for all that God has in store. Prayer is the foundation of our youth work, and we invite you to stand with us in prayer as we prepare for this weekend. As in previous years, we hope that every young person and leader will be personally prayed for throughout the weekend. If you feel able to support us in this way, please contact Sarah at [sarah\\_dent@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sarah_dent@hotmail.co.uk). A prayer letter will be sent out the week before, including key prayer points and the name of someone you can be praying for.

# Prayers



*Harvest is a time for celebration of God's goodness, and his care for all he has made. We think about creation and how we must take care of what we've been blessed with and we give thanks for those that work the land to keep our tables filled with food. Here are some prayers to help lead you into a time of thanks for all God's faithful provision for us.*

## Prayer for Harvest

Loving Father, as we gather this weekend to celebrate Harvest, we give you praise for your creation—for the rhythm of planting and harvest, for sunshine and rain, and for the food on our tables.

Through your Son Jesus, you showed us what true gentleness and compassion look like. At Harvest, when we think about your provision for us, open our eyes to the needs of those around us. Help us to share what we have freely and cheerfully. Bless the gifts that we bring to church this weekend as they find their way to those less fortunate than ourselves.

In Jesus' Name, Amen

## Prayer for Farmers

We thank you Lord for the hands that work the soil, tend the livestock, and gather the crops to feed our communities. We bring before you our local farmers and agricultural workers. We pray for their physical strength during the long, demanding hours of harvest. Protect them in their work, bless their households, and grant them a sense of your constant presence. Help us never to take for granted the devotion and effort behind every meal we enjoy.

Amen

## Prayer for our Climate

Lord God, Creator of all things, you have entrusted us with the care of this delicate and beautiful earth. We pray for our changing world and the increasing uncertainty of our weather. For farmers facing changing seasons, unseasonal rains, and unpredictable heat, grant wisdom, patience, and new avenues of resilience. Forgive us for the ways we have mistreated your creation. Give us, as individuals and as a global community, the courage to be faithful stewards—working to heal the land, safeguard our climate, and protect the world's resources for generations to come.

Amen.