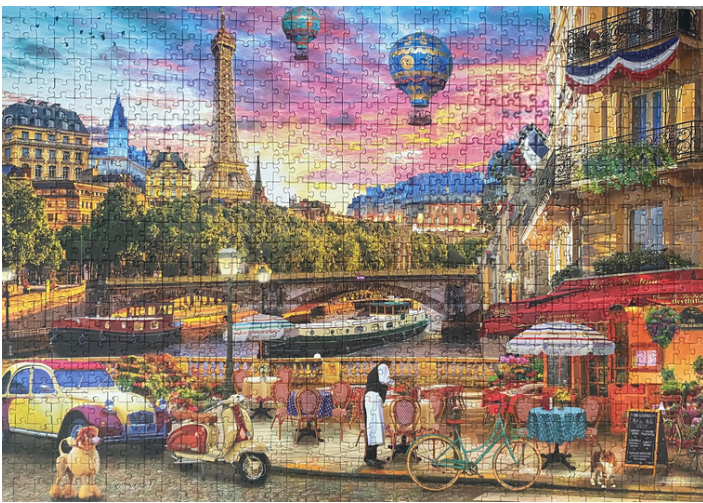


Weekly News

2nd September 2026



I'm not someone who considers myself to have particularly 'cool' hobbies. At school, I was your quintessential bookworm, and I still love a good read. I've also developed an affinity for cryptic crosswords and, more recently, jigsaw puzzles. There's something very relaxing about sifting through the box and switching off my brain to anything but finding the next piece. I recently finished one entitled 'Paris Scene at Sunset', depicting a French bistro on the banks of the Seine against a backdrop of the Eiffel Tower, complete with a couple of hot air balloons floating lazily in a pastel-hued sky.



Gradually completing the puzzle got me thinking about how the only reason I know I can finish jigsaws is because the picture on the box shows me what the final result should look like. How much more difficult would it be without that to refer to? When tipping the pieces out initially, would I even know whether I was making a famous building, an animal, or a garden scene? I might be able to match some pieces together based on colours or patterns, but how would I know where they fit in terms of the whole picture?

Sometimes life can feel a bit like that as well. We can struggle to see how we fit into the bigger picture of God's plan and often wonder how much difference we can really make as one individual. However, I'm reassured by the fact that if there is even one piece of an otherwise finished jigsaw missing, it's incredibly obvious and the whole thing looks incomplete.

I'm reminded of many biblical characters who doubted their calling and lacked confidence in their abilities but were still used powerfully by God as the story of the Bible unfolded. Completing the Bible course earlier this year was a great reminder of what the 'completed puzzle' looks like overall. It can be easy to focus on Bible books that aren't too theologically challenging or revert to stories we remember from Sunday school. By doing this, we risk missing out on the whole narrative of scripture and God's plan for humanity. The recent Ezra sermon series was a great opportunity to look in detail at a part of Israelite history that I'm sure many would agree we were less than familiar with.

As a new academic year begins, how could you better understand and play your part in God's big picture? It might be through individual Bible readings, or a Bible study completed with your small group. Could you be alert to opportunities locally to serve God and your community, or feed back to us about the needs you see around you through our missional listening exercise? However small your role may sometimes feel, may you know you are a vital piece of God's puzzle with a unique role to play.



Sarah

Notices



Groups

After a summer break, church groups start again this week. First Thursday is tomorrow, Men's Breakfast on Saturday and Children's Groups are back to normal on Sunday. We're looking forward to seeing you!

Back to School Movie Night

Wear your favourite PJs or onesie and enjoy a film on the big screen at church at our Back to School Movie Night on 12th September at 6pm. Please book your place [here](#) so that we can order enough pizza for everyone. Cost £5 per person or £10 per family to cover the cost of food.

Missional Listening Challenge

Please remember to speak to friends, family, colleagues and those you meet every day to find out about what needs there are in Newbury and where we see God working. Cards are available in church to give your feedback, or via [the digital version](#). Speak to Helen, Steve, Jo I or Debi if you have any questions.

Barn Dance

Dust off your dancing shoes and join us for a Harvest Barn Dance on 3rd October at 6pm. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy this fun social event, with Music by "Hulabaloo". There will be two sets of dancing, and in the middle we'll share a Ploughman's Supper together. Donations are invited towards the costs of the evening. Please make sure to book your place [here](#) before the end of September.

CTNA Joint Service

Join in with others from churches in Newbury on 18th October for a Joint Service to start the UK National Week of Prayer. The service will be held at St Nicolas Church and will begin at 6pm.

NBC Bake Off

Join us on October 18th for the NBC Bake Off. Whether you excel at showstopping cakes, beautiful biscuits or perfect pastries there will be a category for you. After the winners have been announced, goodies will be available to enjoy with your coffee or take home, with all donations given to Street Pastors. Details of how to enter will be available soon. For now please pop the date in your diary!

Street Pastors

Street Pastors are present in Newbury each Saturday night, staffed by volunteers from local churches (and beyond). Are you able to help? They are looking not only for Street Pastors, but also for people to remain back at base to pray, or be a representative for our church. This takes just half an hour and is only occasionally - perhaps even only once or twice a year. If you're interested in learning more about any of the roles, please speak to Debi, Eve, Peterson or Nick.

Baptism

Curious about baptism? or thinking about taking that step yourself? Peter would love to chat with you and explore what it means - speak to him after a service or drop him [an email](#)

Prayers



Back to School

As our children and young people return to school, pray for a good start to the new year. Pray especially for those starting school for the first time, including: **Coco, Emily, George, Isabelle, Olivia, Sienna.**

Pray for those who moving into secondary school, including: **Charlie, Hudson, Mateus, Rab,**

Pray for our teachers, school workers and those serving as school governors. May this be an encouraging, fruitful year for them all.

We also remember our students who will be returning to university this month, including: **Ben, Ellie and Jemima.**

Giggles and Wiggles re-starts this Friday. Please pray for Chris and the team of helpers as they welcome new children and their parents/carers.

Will & Dee

Please pray for Will and Dee as they get married at NBC on Saturday (5th).

Arthur & Reeta

Our missionaries are now living in Nepal, following safety concerns in the country where they have been based for the past few years. They are now working remotely, which bring inevitable challenges and limitations. Please pray for them as they adjust to this new routine and environment.

They are due to continue working until next Spring, when their contract with their sending organisation finishes. Please pray that God would bring clarity to them as they begin to consider their next steps.

Floods in Nepal and Tibet

Lord God,

We pray for the people of Nepal and Tibet following the devastating floods. Bring comfort to those who have lost loved ones, protection to those made vulnerable, and strength to the emergency teams assisting on the ground. Grant wisdom and provision to local communities as they rebuild, and may your peace rest upon all those affected.

In Jesus' name, Amen.