

Weekly News

21st October 2026



It's been encouraging to hear a number of people say they are enjoying our current sermon series on Mark's gospel. There's a lot to be said for returning to well-known stories. Most of us don't need the basic 'what's going on' explained, which allows more time for uncovering new layers which perhaps we'd not noticed before.

That said, the questions flooding my inbox have started to dry up over the past fortnight. So if you've got one but not sent it in, then please do! I was recently asked a good one about Mark 3, when Mary is outside as part of a group of family members trying to drag Jesus away, concerned he is out of his mind. Why, the questioner asked, is Mary part of this? Surely she knew who her son was? Had she forgotten all the extraordinary events of his birth, etc?

It's a fascinating question. Perhaps a good place to start is by recognising what each gospel does and doesn't include. Mark begins with Jesus as an adult. There is no nativity scene, unlike in Matthew and Luke's gospels. Each paints a portrait of Jesus with different emphases, and we see him best when we allow those differences to speak, whilst also holding them together.

Mark builds a specific scene, with the family setting out and arriving sandwiching the arrival of the religious leaders. The people who should've known Jesus best, his relatives and experts in scripture, both misread him. Mark tells us that Jesus' family is outside, and puts a question to his readers: where are you standing?

When it comes to Mary specifically, much of what we learn about her is found in Luke's gospel. Yet what we find there is her failing to understand Jesus (2:50), and twice "pondering" and "treasuring" things in her heart. The angel promised her that Jesus would inherit the throne of David, but 30 years later that isn't what she's seeing, as Jesus is mobbed so he can't eat and facing a plot to kill him. Luke presents Mary as a mother with some, but not all, understanding. Mark shows us how scary it can be when we're faced with the bits we don't understand.

I find that encouraging. If the mother of Jesus had such a dramatic, powerful encounter with God and yet still doesn't quite understand what he's doing years later, then there's hope for us.

Moreover, the story doesn't end in Mark 3. Jesus says that whoever does God's will is his brother and sister and mother. Luke's Mary is the one who said "let it be to me according to your word." After the resurrection, Mary and the brothers (who John says didn't believe) are praying together with the disciples (Acts 1:14), and James goes on to lead the Jerusalem church.

The people outside came in. And that's good news for us all.

Peter



Notices



NBC Bake Off

A huge thank you to all the amazing bakers who took part in Sunday's NBC Bake Off! Congratulations to Mia, Theo, and Gabriel, whose incredible creations won prizes. Thanks to everyone's generosity (and love of cake!), we raised a fantastic £136 to support the work of Newbury Street Pastors. As well as the delicious treats, we signed up a new NBC Church Representative to lead the street pastors in prayer before they head out on patrol, and someone expressed an interest in becoming a street pastor too.

Shoebags for Ukraine

This Sunday (25th Oct) is the final day to donate your shoebag full of gifts which will be sent to Ukrainian children via the charity Hope Now. If you'd like to support the initiative but have left it too late, you could consider donating cash instead which will go towards the transport costs.

Light Party

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

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

Can you help with painting and preparation for the Light Party the evening before (October 30th at 7pm)? If so, please let Hannah know hannahs@newburybaptistchurch.org

Sonrise Christian Resources

A whole range of Christmas products, including Christmas cards, Advent calendars, Advent candles, stocking fillers and 2027 calendars and diaries, together with Christian books for adults and children, cards and gifts will be available on the Sonrise Christian Resources stall in Market Place, Newbury every Saturday from 31 October to 12 December, 9am – 3pm.

Encounter - Joint Baptist Service

We're joining Thatcham and Basingstoke Baptist Churches for "Encounter" - a worship evening, led by John & Florrie Bishop-Hall.

It's at 7pm on Sunday 15th November at Basingstoke Baptist Church.

All are very welcome - no booking required. If you'd like a lift then please contact the Church Office.

Prayers



Christmas Shoebags

Loving God, we pray for our Christmas Shoebag appeal as donations close this Sunday. Thank you for the generosity of our church family in packing each bag with gifts for children in Ukraine.

We pray for the journey these shoebags will take over the coming weeks. Grant safe passage to every delivery vehicle, driver, and team involved in transporting them, that each bag arrives safely into the hands of the children for whom it was made. We ask that as these gifts are opened, the children would feel deeply loved, and filled with your joy and peace despite the hardship around them.

Above all, Lord, we pray for an end to the war in Ukraine, asking for your peace, protection, and comfort over all its people. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Youth Weekend

Lord, we ask for your blessing on our Youth Weekend starting this Friday.

We pray that the 29 young people taking part may encounter you in new ways, strengthen friendships and join together with other Christians of a similar age.

We pray for the 10 adult leaders from NBC as well as staff at the retreat centre as they make the final preparations. Give them patience, energy and guide them as they minister to our young people.

We pray that the weekend will be a safe, fun and memorable time for everyone involved.

Jess Marchant

Please continue to pray for Jess following her visit last weekend. Pray for her as she leads the sessions on the Youth Weekend and gets to know our young people and leaders.

Pray for our discernment process, that together we would be of one mind when it comes to deciding whether she should join NBC as a Minister-in-Training.

Pray that she would continue to settle into the routines of College life, and manage the demands of reading and writing essays.

Pray for her church and family in Eastleigh as they continue to support her.