

Weekly News

17 SEPTEMBER 2025

Thinking Prayers for Israel

Back in 2015 I (*Peter*) visited Israel as part of an ecumenical study trip. The theme for our 10 days away was 'A Journey of Reconciliation', and we were led by various experts in their field, unpacking the history, divisions, and ongoing work of peace among Christians, Jews and Muslims in Israel and Palestine.

From listening to the disillusioned son of an Israeli general, to visiting the Palestinian Christian whose family had farmed the olives on their land for generations but were increasingly under attack from settlers - it was an eye-opening trip, and remains one of the most formative experiences of my life.

There were some special moments where God seemed especially present, such as on a boat on the sea of Galilee, and walking up to the 'mount' where Jesus gave his famous sermon in Matthew 5-7. But what left the strongest imprint on my mind was witnessing the dividing and caging of humans in the West Bank. To walk along the narrow lanes of Hebron in what was once a busy marketplace, and see the metal grids installed above our heads - fitted to prevent the various rocks, bottles and shrapnel thrown from Israeli settlers down towards their Palestinian neighbours - was a harrowing experience.

It made me question assumptions I had made about Israel being God's people, and the nature of their claims over the land. But surely the Bible was clear on the matter? This was the inheritance promised to the Jews. The land belonged to them, and they had a divine right over it. Right?

Yet surely God would not condone the inhumane treatment of people equally made in his image, some of whom were fellow Christians? It is a challenge which has stuck with me over the past decade, and has been in particular focus in recent months as the intensity of Israel's bombing of Gaza has increased.

It is a deeply complex political, sociological and ethical problem. It is also a theological one, and it is precisely this reason that causes many Christians to conclude that Israel's behaviour is justified.

However, I have come to conclude that the biblical understanding of God's People, Land, and Kingdom, is distinct from the modern political nation of Israel. The coming of Christ as fulfilment of Yahweh's promises and to model Kingdom values offers clear insight into how God's people are to behave.

Following this week's publication of the UN report into possible acts of genocide by Israel, the need for us to demonstrate good theological reflection is vital, lest we unintentionally condone such acts in our conversations with others.

The importance of prayer is also key. Our CTNA prayer meeting last night was encouraging in that regard, but it should not be a one-off on our prayer list. As Sunday's passage from Romans noted, when we run out of words to say, the Holy Spirit takes the baton and intercedes directly to the Father on our behalf. May that inspire and encourage us to keep praying for peace, justice and for God's will to be done and his Kingdom come.

WHAT'S ON @ NBC

CTNA WEEK OF PRAYER
14-20 SEPT

NBC'S GOT TALENT
SATURDAY 11TH OCTOBER 5.30PM
[BOOK HERE](#)

INSPIRE PARENTING COURSE
SUNDAY 12TH OCTOBER 12 NOON
[BOOK HERE](#)

JOINT BREAKFAST
WITH "ARTHUR AND REETA"
18TH OCTOBER 8.30AM
BOOKING COMING SOON

Notice Board

We're Recruiting!

If you know of anyone who might be interested in a part time Children's Worker role at NBC please do direct them to [our website](#) where full details including a job description are shown. Please also pray that the right person sees the details and applies for the position.

CTNA Week of Prayer

The week of prayer continues across various churches in Newbury. For more details of locations and dates/times, please [click here](#).

Christmas in a Shoe Bag

This year's Christmas Shoebags are now available from the Church Foyer. Each bag contains instructions and suggested gifts that we can collect for some of the poorest children in Ukraine. Please speak to Judith, Kelvin or Luda if you have any questions.

CAP Money Coaching Course

This course is designed to help people understand their spending habits and create their own personal budget. The course can help anyone including students, employed people, families, retirees and is not only for those people with unmanageable debts.

NBC is hosting the next course run by Helen and David in the large hall from 10am - 12noon on October 15th, 22nd & 29th. Register for free at <https://moneycoaching.capuk.org/join-course/c6547faf-d293-4bfd-b7fa-64667969bfe8>

Please invite your friends and neighbours to come along to this course. We would appreciate it if you would pray for the course and the participants.

NBC's Got Talent

[Book your tickets](#) for NBC's got talent - an evening of entertainment provided by church family! It's on Saturday 11th October at 5.30. Ticket includes a jacket potato & chilli (vegetarian option available). The cost is £5 per adult / £3 per child. We are also in need of volunteers to help set up and clear away afterwards. If you can help please speak to Julie or Steve.

Care for the Family

On Sunday 12th October after the morning service we will be running an 'Inspire' course, aimed at parents, grandparents and anyone who wants to nurture faith in children and young people. The session will include video teaching from Care for the Family and the opportunity to learn from and support each other. Supervised games and activities for children will be provided.

[Please book your place online here](#)

Care for the Family are also holding events locally this autumn which may be of interest: Going the distance: Creating a vibrant and lasting marriage' at the DoubleTree Hotel in Swindon on Tuesday 21st October at 19:30, tickets £6.

Teens and Tweens: Hope & help for parents through the turbulence of those tween years and beyond' at Andover Community Church on Tuesday 25th November at 19:30, tickets £6.

We have four free tickets available for the Teens and Tweens event, if you would like one please speak to Sarah Masters or email sarahm@newburybaptistchurch.org



Only God Makes Things Grow...What do we do?

You're probably aware by now of our verse for the year, based on 1 Corinthians 3:7: "Only God makes things grow," visualised by our fig tree which has exceeded all expectations in growing and producing fruit!

It's been brilliant to see the tree growing and illustrate the good work which God is doing across NBC, and the way he is working through so many within the congregation. This good work has prompted the church members to begin discussing in recent months whether we need to expand our ministry team by recruiting a second full-time minister.

It is an exciting proposition, and would be a significant step for NBC, both in terms of the opportunities to develop our ministries and mission work, and as a financial commitment.

We have adopted a 'slow wisdom' approach to discerning whether this is something God is leading us towards; meaning we have taken our time both in Deacon's and Church Meetings to discuss, pray, and listen to God, without rushing into making a decision.

At the Church Meeting in June, our Treasurer Tom outlined our financial position, and we set the church a challenge to eliminate the current budget deficit of just under £25,000, before we felt able to proceed with calling another minister.

At Sunday's Church Meeting the latest finance update showed a very encouraging increase in income from both regular giving and lettings, and we are well on the way to meeting our target.

Whether you are someone who already gives regularly, or who has perhaps joined the church in recent months and wants to contribute to the work of God in this way, would you prayerfully review your giving and consider whether you are able to start or increase the amount you give?

Our finance team will be preparing the budget for 2026 over the next few weeks, and every contribution makes a difference. As Peter has said previously: *One big step of faith is often made up of lots of small steps of faith.*

If you have any questions please do get in touch: finance@newburybaptistchurch.org

Thank you!





PRAYER

PRAYING FOR ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

If you missed the CTNA Prayer Meeting yesterday but would still like some guidance on where to start in praying for Israel and Palestine, here are some prompts/suggestions.

A Prayer for Leaders

Prince of Peace, we lift up to you the leaders of Israel and Palestine—those who carry the weight of their people's hopes and fears. Grant them wisdom that transcends political calculation, courage to make difficult choices for peace, and hearts softened toward reconciliation.

Help them see beyond the cycle of retaliation to envision a future where both peoples can flourish in security and dignity. We also pray for world leaders who seek to mediate and facilitate peace—give them patient persistence, genuine understanding of both peoples' needs, and the ability to speak truth with love. Guide their words and decisions, that they might be instruments of your peace rather than vessels of division

Transform their hearts, Lord, and use them to break the chains of mistrust that have bound these lands for generations.

Prayer for the Land

Lord of all creation, you have called this land holy, yet it has become a source of division rather than blessing. We pray for Jerusalem, the city of peace that has known too little peace. We pray for Gaza, for the West Bank, for all the towns and villages where fear overshadows daily life.

Transform this contested ground into a place where both peoples can call home without fear. May the stones that have witnessed so much bloodshed become foundations for justice and mutual respect.

Let your kingdom come in this place, where Abraham's children—both Isaac and Ishmael's descendants—might dwell together in peace.

Prayer for the Grieving and Wounded

Jesus, our Healer, we bring before you all who mourn—Israeli families who have lost children, Palestinian mothers who weep for their sons and daughters, fathers on both sides who will never return home.

Comfort those whose hearts are shattered by violence and loss. Heal the wounded in body and spirit, and be present with those who live in fear. Help survivors find strength not in vengeance but in your love.

Give them hope that their suffering is not meaningless, and that from their pain, new life and understanding might somehow grow. Bind up the brokenhearted and restore what violence has torn away.

