

## Making Space for Slow Wisdom

Last week I attended the annual Southern Counties Baptist Association leaders conference. While it may not rival Spring Harvest for inspiring worship or attract Billy Graham-esque crowds, it was nevertheless a useful couple of days to slow down and reflect.

The theme for the teaching sessions was 'discernment' - a thoroughly Baptist word - with four sessions shared between two speakers. The first, Ruth Moriarty, has recently published a book based on her doctoral research exploring the nature of discernment in Baptist Church Meetings.

She has coined the phrase *slow wisdom* to summarise the key takeaway from her findings. *Slow wisdom* is essentially the process of slowing down to take our time when an issue needs discernment, recognising that enabling greater input by members at Church Meetings brings not only a greater sense of shared ownership, but often uncovers deeper layers of wisdom which can be missed by quick decision-making.

The diaconate at NBC have already been engaging with this over the past year or so, and have committed to practicing this in our meetings together when we believe a matter requires careful discernment, rather than a quicker decision. We will also be practicing this in our own Church Meetings, beginning later this month.

Church Members will see from the agenda and accompanying papers that we will be having a discussion about developing our understanding of and participation in mission. This is a big issue and will require time, prayer, careful listening, and active engagement in order for us to draw conclusions which we can then put into practice. I encourage you to note the Church Meeting dates in your diary and make every effort to attend, especially if you don't normally come along.

I'm mindful of the fact that among our membership we have people from a range of denominational backgrounds, some of whom don't see the point in Church Meetings. Others have had bad experiences and vowed not to return. If that's you, then I can only say 'please give it a(nother) go'. As the body of Christ, we are richer for your presence and your input.

As Baptists, we reject the episcopacy practiced by other denominations. Instead, we recognise that while God does call some to be set aside for leadership roles, we uphold the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9). This means when the body of Christ gathers to listen to God (the Church Meeting), we expect God to speak through us, and for us to discern the mind of Christ. It is a lofty expectation, and perhaps one which Baptist churches have too often failed to live up to. With your participation and a healthy dose of *slow wisdom*, my hope is that our Church Meetings this year will be engaging, constructive, and most of all, a place where God speaks and we hear.



by Peter Timothy, Minister

### Coming Up @ NBC

#### Ladies' Breakfast

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February  
8.30am

[BOOK HERE](#)

#### Church Member's Meeting

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February  
following the 10am service

#### First Thursday

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March  
12 noon

[BOOK HERE](#)

# NOTICES



## Theo's Half Marathon for CALM

Theo will be running a half marathon in March, raising money for CALM - (Campaign Against Living Miserably) a mental health charity. If you're able to support his fundraising efforts please donate via his Justgiving page [here](#). Theo would like to thank everyone for being such a supportive church family he has raised nearly £1000 already following his presentation last Sunday.

## Welcome Lunch

On 8<sup>th</sup> March after the service we will hold a "Welcome Lunch" for those new to NBC. If you would like to come along, please speak to Emma in the church office or sign up online [here](#) before 1<sup>st</sup> March. If you are a church member and would like to help on the day, please contact Judith & Kelvin.

## Save the Date!

We're looking forward to Rowena and Ian's wedding, which will be on Saturday 2nd May at 2.00pm (apologies for the typo in last week's Weekly News!) They'd love the church family to join them for the wedding service, so please do put the date in your diary. The celebration afterwards will be by invitation only for close family and friends,

## COINS in Falkland

On Thurs 12 Feb, David Clark, Jenny Ferguson and Claire Smith will be joining COINS (Christian Outreach in Newbury Schools) for a session at Falkland Primary School in Wash Common. Alongside Christians from other Newbury churches, they'll be answering questions from year 5 pupils (aged 9-10) about what is it to be a Christian, and what we do as part of our faith. Please pray for good answers! Pray especially for the developing relationship between COINS and Falkland school.

## Street Pastors

Street Pastors are a group of local Christians who offer support, practical help and a visible ministry to those who are out in Newbury late at night. They use NBC as a base each Saturday evening. Whilst a team goes out into town, some people stay and cover them in prayer. They are looking for more people to become "Prayer Pastors" who will be willing to pray at church from 10pm until around 1am about once every 5 weeks. Please speak to Debi or Eve if you'd like to know more

## Christmas Shoe Bags

Thank you to everyone who made a shoe bag at Christmas or donated to transport costs.

Here is a photo of children receiving our bags at a Christmas party in Cherkasy, Ukraine.



## Lightning Squad - help needed

We're blessed to have lots of children at NBC, along with a great team of leaders who plan and run our groups. We're looking for a few extra people who might be willing to be an occasional extra pair of hands on a Sunday morning. If you're able to help support Lightning Squad from time to time, we'd be really grateful. Everything is planned by the leaders – it's simply a case of helping out on the day. If you think this might be something you could offer, please have a chat with Chris C.

# PRAYERS



## Prayers from our Prayer Board

*This month we introduced a new prayer board in our service, where we can write prayers and attach them to a board in the church. We have recently had a number of 'thank you' prayers shared, and we have included a selection below for you to be encouraged and join in with a hearty 'amen'!*

- Praise the Lord - Got the Job offer!
- Thanks for Naomi's safe arrival, for the provision of housing and language lessons and a good settling in period. Thanks for the prayers and support of the NBC family
- Thank you Lord for blessing us with a church family
- Thank you for all my friends at NBC
- Thank you Jesus and God for my Granny and Grampa

*The following prayer requests have also been submitted:*

- Healing from depression, Victory in my process. Help my lawyers in my lawsuit. I need Joy & Peace
- Pray for Alice & Colin as they adjust to being back in the UK
- Pray for Sean who fell from a ladder
- Pray that God looks after my family
- For my nanny's leg to get better
- For Andy, who has been diagnosed with cancer
- For family and friends who are experiencing life-changing medical issues

## Search Team update

We are delighted to share that the church profile and the application form have been submitted to the Regional Minister, and our church is now on the Baptist Union Pastoral Vacancy List.

Our first fixed review date (set by the BU) is coming on 28th February, so we would like you to join us in prayer in the search for the second minister. A couple of things to consider in your prayers please:

- To be a smooth process as a whole;
- To have some applications within the first review date;
- Guidance and wisdom from God to shortlist the candidates;
- Open heart during the interviews;
- Discernment to see/decide beyond the profiles.

## Prayers for Canada & Tumbler Ridge

Just before we were set to publish today's newsletter, the news came in that nine people have been killed at a shooting in Canada. At least 25 others have been injured following the attack in the small town of Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia. These numbers include several at a secondary school.

- Please pray that God may comfort the families of those killed.
- Pray for those injured to receive the medical care they need, and for full recoveries to be made.
- Pray for those in the wider community and across Canada who will be fearful following this attack.
- Pray for the government as they process this news and consider what can be done to reduce the risks of future shootings.