

A Familiar Face in Swindon

Dear Friends

It has been a privilege to be a member of Newbury Baptist Church for the past 19 years, which is by far the longest I have been a member anywhere! However during all of those years I have had a wider ministry and so I have only ever been an occasional visitor to NBC. For the last five years I have been the minister of Central Church, Swindon and I would love to tell you about it.

Central Church is only 48 years old. It was born at a time of massive development in the centre of Swindon New Town. There were five churches in the area – Methodist, Presbyterian, Churches of Christ, Congregational and Baptist. Happily the ministers and churches had a very strong relationship and they came to the conclusion that it would be good for them to form a single ecumenical church. It was a bold decision. One of the biggest decisions they had to take was where to meet and it was decided to demolish the grand old Baptist Church and build an entirely new building there. This was opened in 1990 and it has proved a wonderful home for the church.

The new church building was called The Pilgrim Centre to remind everyone that, as the people of God, we are always on the move. The church is on four levels. On the ground floor is a large cafe and kitchen which can accommodate about 60 people.

On the first floor is an impressive auditorium which can seat more than 250 people. And then on the next two floors there is a wonderful variety of offices and meeting rooms. We are truly blessed to have such amazing premises and they are well used.

Central Church is only one of three churches which use the Pilgrim Centre. We are delighted to welcome New Life Church which meets after us on a Sunday, and also a large Brazilian church which meets on Saturday evenings. Every morning the doors of the cafe are open welcoming people to breakfast between 7.30 and 9.00. We work in close partnership with a charity called Big Breakfast Plus which offers a free cooked breakfast to between 80 and 100 people every day. Some of our guests come because they are homeless or lonely but everyone is welcome with no questions asked.

I have ministered in churches for over fifty years but I have never seen a church quite like Central Church and it is an incredible privilege to serve them. I am very grateful for the prayerful support and interest of so many people at NBC. Some of you receive my monthly prayer diary and, if you don't receive it and would like to, do please send me your email address and I will gladly send it to you. jpageedwards2@gmail.com

God bless you,
Yours ever,
Jonathan



by Rev Jonathan Edwards

Coming Up @ NBC

First Thursday

Thursday 5th March
12 noon

[BOOK HERE](#)

Men's Breakfast

Saturday 7th March
8am

[BOOK HERE](#)

NOTICES



Welcome Lunch

If you're new to NBC you've hopefully received an invitation to our next "Welcome Lunch". If you haven't, and you'd like to come along, please speak to Emma in the church office or sign up online [here](#) before 1st March. If you are a church member and would like to help on the day, please contact Judith & Kelvin.

World Day of Prayer

The annual World Day of Prayer Service is being held at St Joseph's Church, 105 London Rd, Newbury RG14 1JP, on Friday March 6th at 11am. The theme for this year's service is: 'I Will Give You Rest, Come' written by Christian women from Nigeria. All are welcome!

Save the Date!

We're looking forward to Rowena and Ian's wedding, which will be on [Saturday](#) 2nd May at 2.00pm. They'd love the church family to join them for the wedding service, so please do put the date in your diary. A small reception will follow in the Church Hall by invitation for close family and friends. Many people have kindly asked about wedding gifts, but the happy couple have requested 'no gifts, please' – your presence and prayers are more than enough! However, if anyone would like to mark the occasion with a gesture, they have suggested a donation to NBC instead.

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.

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.

Contact Us

Want to include something next week? Have something you'd like the church to pray for?

Email Emma in the Church Office by Wednesday 9am: office@newburybaptistchurch.org

PRAYERS



Prayers and Reflection for the second week of Lent

Lent invites us to slow down and honestly examine what we carry; our habits, our hurts, and the quiet ways we drift from God. In this second week, we move deeper into the wilderness alongside Jesus, reminded that the journey inward is rarely comfortable but always purposeful. Like Abraham, who trusted God's call without knowing the full path ahead, we are asked to walk by faith rather than by sight. These forty days are not meant to defeat us but to strip away what is unnecessary, so that we might arrive at Easter with hearts made ready. May this week be one of honest surrender and renewed trust.

Mark 8:34-35

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.'

This Week's Prayer

Gracious and patient God,

We come to You again in this season of reflection, grateful that You meet us exactly where we are; in our doubts, our distractions, and our deep longing for something more. As we walk through these Lenten days, quiet the noise within us that drowns out Your voice. Help us to resist the temptations that pull us away from Your purposes, just as Your Son withstood every trial in the wilderness and remained steadfast in Your will.

Lord, where we have been prideful, grant us humility. Where we have been fearful, grant us courage rooted in Your promises. Where we have grown cold in our devotion, stir within us again the warmth of first love for You.

We confess that we do not always hunger for You the way we hunger for the comforts of this world. Forgive us, and draw us back. Teach us to fast not only from food, but from whatever distracts our hearts from holy things; from busyness, from bitterness, from the endless noise of our own anxieties.

As this second week unfolds, lead us further into Your presence. Strengthen us as a congregation to walk together in faithfulness, bearing one another's burdens and pointing each other toward Your grace. May our Lenten journey be less about what we give up and more about what we receive - a deeper knowledge of You and a truer vision of who You have called us to be.

In the holy and saving name of Jesus, amen.

Church Family Prayers

Barbara W - Who is especially poorly at this time, following a number of infections.

Beryl R - Has now received a date for her operation next month. Pray that she will be well enough for the operation to proceed, and for it to be successful.

David P - Facing uncertainty following a recent car accident.