

The Original April Fool

A school friend of mine loves to play pranks on April Fools' Day. The only problem is he now lives in Australia, so is resigned to sending us vaguely believable stories on What's App. I remember a few years ago we all fell for his tale of woe regarding an unfortunate incident with his mother-in-law, resulting in her suggestion that he "see a therapist"...the finer details perhaps not appropriate for a church newsletter!

However this morning none of us was falling for his claim that his son and all his friends have recently started watching football, only they all support Tottenham! *There's vaguely believable, then there's the simply ludicrous...*

To be considered an April Fool is a light-hearted term widely used across Europe and beyond, referencing the historical jesters or 'fools' who would entertain nobility in the middle ages.

However, when used as a noun or adjective, the word fool takes on a more serious meaning. It can describe someone who acts unwisely, or someone who is deceived into doing something.

This year we find April 1st coincides with Holy Week and specifically the day when we remember Judas' betrayal of Jesus. It is an understatement to say Judas was foolish in his decision-making, yet Luke suggests there was an inevitability to his actions, writing in 22:3 "then Satan entered Judas".

His foolish betrayal contrasts sharply with the other gospel passage traditionally read on the Wednesday of Holy Week: Jesus' anointing at Bethany. The devotional act of taking expensive perfume to wash Jesus' feet by a woman often identified as Mary, contrasts sharply with Judas' behaviour. In fact Matthew, Mark and John all make a direct connection between this event and Judas' decision to go to the Chief Priests.

As we reflect on these pivotal moments in Holy Week, it can be easy to align ourselves with the woman and distance ourselves from Judas. Yet the reality of their stories is far more complicated. Judas had evidently followed Jesus for three years and gained the trust of his fellow disciples. His actions are a pointed reminder that even those closest to Jesus can be vulnerable to deception and betrayal. Conversely, the woman quite literally makes an incredibly costly decision, which challenges what it means to worship Christ with our whole selves.

I encourage you to take a moment today to pause and examine your heart. Are there selfish desires steering our decision-making away from God? What does loyalty to Jesus look like in your life right now? It may be that today is a time to seek repentance, receive restoration, and offer forgiveness, as we look towards the One who makes this possible through his death and resurrection.

I look forward to joining with you in worship over the coming days, as we continue or journey together through this holiest of weeks.

Peter



by Peter Timothy
Minister

Coming Up @ NBC

First Thursday

Thursday 2nd April

12 noon

[BOOK HERE](#)

Maundy Thursday

Thursday 2nd April, 7.30pm

Thatcham Baptist Church

Good Friday

Friday 3rd April, 10.30am

CTNA joint service

St Nicolas' Church

Men's Breakfast

Saturday 4th April

8am

[BOOK HERE](#)

Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service 6.15

Greenham Control Tower

All-Age Service 10am

NOTICES



Prayer Meeting for a Second Minister

We would like to invite you to join us for a special prayer meeting at **7.30pm on Wednesday 15th April** as we continue our search for a second minister. This will take place in the Church.

Nomination of Deacons

Our next Church Meeting on 19th April includes our AGM and the election of deacons.

The following people have been nominated to stand:

Helen Andrews - Nominated by Alice McDermott and Sarah Dent

Tom Clifton - Nominated by Nick Freeman and Dave Andrews

Tim Dent - Nominated by Valerie Vardy and Bruce Whorton

Jo Isherwood - Nominated by Simon Cutts and Hannah Swain

Neal Rankin - Nominated by Shirley Butler and Peggy Oxley

Easter Services

Journey through Holy Week with services here and across churches in Newbury:

Maundy Thursday we will join together with our friends at Thatcham Baptist Church for a service at 7:30pm.

on **Good Friday** there is a joint CTNA service at St Nic's Church at 10.30am which will be followed by a walk to the Methodist Church for singing and hot cross buns / refreshments.

If you're awake early on **Easter Sunday** morning, CTNA are holding a Sunrise Service at 6.15am at the Greenham Control Tower

We will celebrate Jesus' resurrection with an all-age service on **Easter Sunday** at 10am here at NBC - come along and join with us!

Venturers 2026

Nine young people from NBC are currently with 35 other teenagers on the Norfolk Broads on Saturday for Venturers 2026, a week of sailing, fun and exploring faith. We'd value your prayers during the week. Flo, Jemima and Theo are taking on roles as young leaders, and Ben is joining the 'offsail' team for the first time. Claire is a Skipper again, sailing a yacht with young people each day, and Kev is in charge of the whole week! Things to especially pray for are: the 15 young people coming for the first time, two new Skippers, and good discussions from our talks and quiet times. Thank you!

Please also pray for some other younger members of our church who are attending Spring Harvest during the Easter Holidays. Pray that all these young people have fun, keep safe and meet with Jesus through their various activities.

NOTICES



The Bible Course

We are excited to launch The Bible Course, an eight-session journey designed to help you navigate the world's bestseller and see how the big picture fits together. We have split the course into two blocks of four weeks: the first begins the week of 27th April, and the second block starts the week of 8th June. There are two ways to participate to suit your schedule: join us online ([via this Google Meet link](#)) on Mondays 8 to 9.30pm or in person on Wednesdays (7.15pm for a 7.30pm start). Whether you are well-versed in Scripture or just starting out, this course is a fantastic way to deepen your understanding in a friendly, discussion-based environment. There is an optional book to accompany the course - [details here](#). We're hoping Small Groups might be able to get together and order in bulk to save money, but if you are not a member of a small group feel free to buy your own.

First Thursday

Jonathan will lead our "First Thursday" worship tomorrow. Join us for a short service and meal afterwards. Please do let us know that you are coming - either by booking online [here](#), or if you prefer by emailing firstthursday@newburybaptistchurch.org or by speaking to Daph.

Men's Breakfast

Join us for Men's Breakfast on Saturday, 4th April at 8am. Derek will speak to us about being "under the influence"! Please book your place online [here](#)

Rotas

Please do have a look at the rotas from Easter onwards, and sign up where you're able - there are quite a few gaps for services in the Summer Term. If there is a role you'd like to do but don't have access to sign up to, please speak to someone who currently does the role or contact Emma in the office. Thank you to everyone who plays their part in making our services run smoothly.

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 welcome area from 10am - 12noon on April 15th, 22nd and 29th. Register for free [here](#)

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.

We are in need of one or two volunteers to help us do teas and coffees for people as they arrive and about half way through at 11am. If you're able to help please contact David Clark or Helen Andrews.

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 gam: office@newburybaptistchurch.org

PRAYERS

A Payer for Holy Week

Holy Week is not a dress rehearsal for Easter Sunday. It is the road itself; dusty, contested, and lined with people who wanted Jesus to be something other than he was. We follow him this week not to observe from a safe distance, but to let the journey do its work on us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, this week we walk the road with you, from the shouts of the crowd to the silence of the garden, from the breaking of bread to the breaking of your body.

Keep us from rushing to the resurrection before we have sat with the cost of it.

Give us courage to stay present when presence is uncomfortable, and honesty to see ourselves in those who turned away.

Where we have dressed you in the clothes of our own making - a Jesus who confirms what we already believe, who blesses what we have already decided - strip us back to the one who walks ahead of us towards the place we would not choose.

As you move through betrayal, abandonment, and death, move also through whatever in us still clings to an easier gospel. Meet us in the places we have sealed shut, and do not leave us as we are.

We trust you with the whole of it: The darkness and what lies beyond it.

Amen.

Church Family Prayers

Beryl R - We are pleased to report that Beryl is now recovering on a ward at RBH following major surgery. The recovery period is expected to be lengthy, and due to a lack of beds at West Berkshire Hospital, she is likely to be staying at Royal Berks for the foreseeable future. Please pray for her, for effective pain control, for her body to heal well, and for her witness to the staff at the hospital.

Naomi - Pray for her as she continues with her language lessons. She has recently been assessing and responding to the annual reports submitted from the various projects in her organisation. Pray that she is able to develop friendships, particularly through the women's gym which she has joined, and for her continued wellbeing and safety.

Arthur and Reeta - Reeta has now returned, following a month of travelling in Nepal and Europe to attend various meetings and receive essential dental treatment. Pray for them as they continue to serve God in a volatile and difficult part of the world.

Rowena & Ian - As they prepare for their wedding on 2nd May please pray that the final plans will come together and for God to enrich their marriage and bless this new season of life together.
