

FELLOWSHIP, FUN, FIRST THURSDAY!

One of NBC's longest running initiatives is *First Thursday*, which stretches back 60 years in various guises. The archives make some sketchy references to a lunch being provided for carers of the housebound in the 1960's. In 1975 these lunches were replaced by a weekly buffet lunch, followed by a service during Lent. These Lent lunches became a regular feature for some 20 years until they were discontinued around 1995. By 2005, our Associate Minister, Rev Rashell Beya, initiated a mission to the older folk with a week's Holiday at Home in August alongside a monthly lunch.

First Thursday has remained a regular feature since then through the determination of many dedicated volunteers. Only COVID and the occasional election have caused cancellations!

We usually meet at midday for a short service of traditional hymns and a reflection led by Peter, Jonathan or Graham. This is followed by a two-course meal in the Hall and tea/coffee. The exceptions are August, when we provide an afternoon tea, and December, where we enjoy Christmas dinner along with a party atmosphere.

For some who come this may be one of the few regular opportunities to meet others over a meal for a chat. There are no age limits, although the midday timing means that the regulars are generally pensioners. Many of the attendees do not otherwise attend our church, and we recognise this provides an important missional opportunity.

We recently launched our season of listening to the needs of our community in order to develop our mission focus. I wonder where First Thursday may fit, and whether the needs you are hearing link with the work and possibilities of this ministry?

I'd love to hear what you think God might be saying as we prayerfully consider it all.

Whatever the future holds, it depends on a team of volunteers. We would love to expand this team to ensure First Thursday is sustainable long into the future.

If you'd like to get involved then please speak to me.



Steve

Why I Love First Thursday



First Thursday is one of my favourite activities at NBC. Pat Dent invited me, although I wasn't sure if she was inviting me to be a helper or as a guest, so I said that I would love to help! Pat was responsible for the table arrangements and the registration of guests. I was extremely impressed with how she knew each guest personally and made them feel valued even if they were not regular at NBC. She knew that some of them lived alone and had little social contact apart from First Thursday. I worked alongside Pat and tried hard to remember all the names – I'm still trying!

After Covid, a few of us wondered if First Thursday could continue. Rita and I offered to lead temporarily. Five years later and with Rita having celebrated her 90th birthday, we were grateful for Steve coming on board as leader, adding to our brilliant team of committed helpers.

I continue to help on reception, trying to give personal reminders at the end of the previous week. I love the way guests arrive with smiles of anticipation and chattering to each other and us, as they make their way to seats. I love the short service that we all enjoy. It is incredibly rewarding to be part of the team and to know what pleasure it gives to so many people, and seems a wonderful way to minister to people who may go to a variety of churches or not be able to attend church at all.

Daph

NOTICES



Mega Makers

Join us for a Summer of fun at NBC over the next 6 weeks. Church has been turned into a science lab, and each Sunday service all ages will come together to learn about God. There will be experiments, crafts and fun for all the family! As children will be worshipping with us, there will be no separate Bright Sparks, Lightning Squad or Spotlight groups until September.

Baptism

Curious about baptism? or thinking about taking that step yourself? Peter would love to chat with you and explore what it means - speak to him after a service or drop him [an email](#)

Missional Listening Challenge

At the last Church Meeting, members were set a challenge to engage with our existing networks to listen to the challenges and concerns they're facing. We are seeking to listen carefully to our community in order to identify needs and to help us discern where and how God might be calling us to respond. The challenge is not to quiz people with a survey or questionnaire, but to gather information through natural conversations rooted in genuine care. We've created a card with some suggested question prompts which can be filled in after your conversation and handed back for us to process. A digital version is also available [here](#). Speak to Helen, Steve, Jo I or Debi if you have any questions.

Summer Socials

We know how hard it is to keep children entertained over the long summer holiday, so we hope you can join us for some free Summer Social events. Please do pick up a flyer in church too and give to friends and family - everyone is very welcome! The events are as follows:

Monday 3rd August 12 noon - Den Building & Ball Games at Snelsemore Common

Tuesday 1st September 12 noon - Splash Pad at Victoria Park

And then on 12th September at 6pm we'll have a Back to School Movie night. Wear your favourite PJs or onesie and enjoy a film on the big screen with Pizza! Please book your place [here](#) so that we can order enough pizza for everyone. Cost £5 per person or £10 per family.

Andy Kind - Christian Comedian/Preacher

Andy Kind is a comedian, preacher and writer. Andy's stand-up style is the joyful ranting of a redeemed alpha male. He has been featured on BBC1, ITV and Channel 4, while he's had jokes featured on Dave's One Night Stand and Live at the Apollo. He's coming to Newbury on Thursday July 23rd at 7.30pm in St Nicolas Church Hall. Tickets are £9 and available [here](#)

Made for you - Women's Conference

Saturday 26th September 2026 at Testwood Baptist Church, Southampton

A one day conference for women to equip, encourage and enjoy God together - with Lou Fellingham and guests. More information can be found [here](#) and if you click on 'tickets' it will show you the schedule for the day. For more information speak to Julie and if you book a ticket please let her know so we can coordinate lifts nearer the time. julieb@newburybaptistchurch.org

Want to include something next week?

Email Emma by Weds, 9am: office@newburybaptistchurch.org

PRAYERS

Church Family Prayers

Beryl R - Please pray for Beryl who is suffering with a build-up of fluid in her body which is causing several complicated problems. Pray that she will receive prompt results from recent scans and an effective treatment plan can be made.

John & Audrey P send their love and greetings to all at NBC who remember them. They have settled into their care home in Burford, although miss the fellowship at church. They would welcome any visitors!

John recently celebrated his 90th birthday, but has been experiencing a nasty cough over the past few weeks and is awaiting the result of an x-ray. Please pray for them both.

Will & Dee - As Will and Dee prepare for their wedding on 5th September please pray that the final preparations would go well. Pray too for their marriage preparation classes with Peter over the summer, that they would prompt helpful discussion and help them build firm foundations for their life together.

A Prayer for our Nation & New Prime Minister

Loving God, we lift up Andy Burnham as he takes up the responsibility of serving as our new Prime Minister. We pray that you would grant him, and all those in government, wisdom, discernment, and integrity. Give them strength for the challenges they will face, a genuine heart for the vulnerable in our society, and the ability to listen well to the needs of the people. May their leadership foster justice, peace, and hope across our nation, and may we, as your church, continue to pray for and support the flourishing of our communities. Amen.

A Prayer for First Thursday

Lord, we give you great thanks for the incredible legacy of First Thursday at NBC, and for the joy, friendship, and connection it brings to so many people. Thank you for the dedicated team of volunteers who have kept this vital ministry running through the years. We pray especially for our guests, particularly those who live alone, that they would always find a place of warmth and belonging here. Please open doors for new volunteers to join the team, ensuring First Thursday remains sustainable long into the future. Amen.

A Prayer for the School Holidays

Lord God, as the schools close for the summer holidays, we pray for all the families in our church and local community. We ask you to bless the upcoming Summer Socials and our Summer all-age services. We pray they would be times of great fun, connection, and spiritual growth for all generations. We ask for renewed energy, patience, and joy for parents and carers over these next six weeks. We pray for children who may be feeling anxious about transitions or going back to school in September, that they would find rest and reassurance during the break. Amen