

Cheshunt Free Church Newsletter November 2024

Services in November

3rd Worship with Michaela Lawrence

10th Worship with Kathleen Laing

17th Worship with Mark Johnson

24th Worship with Mark Robinson



Dear Friends

As the season turns and we enter November, we find ourselves drawn into the act of remembrance, not merely as a ritual of the past but as a living engagement with our world, our faith, and our future. In remembering, we are doing more than recalling names and events; we are entering into a theological reflection, an act of solidarity with those who came before and those who still suffer today. We remember the victims of conflict, the fallen and the survivors, those who have borne the weight of war in body and soul. We remember the sacrifice of those who, driven by the hope of peace, fought and lost their lives so that others might live in freedom. Yet, even as we honour these sacrifices, we cannot turn away from the ongoing conflicts that continue to scar our world. Injustice, division, and inequality are not relics of history but daily realities for millions. From the streets of Gaza to the plight of refugees fleeing war and poverty, the brokenness we remember is not far away—it is with us here and now.

In the midst of this brokenness, we turn to the God who remembers. Ours is a God who does not forget the oppressed, who hears the cries of the afflicted, and those in need of healing, who remembers us even when we feel abandoned. Yet this is also a God who forgets—not our worth or our struggles, but our wrong doing, our failures, and our mistakes. In God's great mercy, we find both remembrance and forgiveness, an invitation to be made whole, to be reconciled with God and one another.

The Bible calls us into this act of remembering not to remain in the past but to be propelled toward the future. We remember the stories of liberation—the exodus from Egypt, the return from exile, the resurrection of Christ—not just to honour history but to live into the reality of what God is doing now. God's realm is not a far-off dream but a present and urgent call. Jesus reminds us that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us “to proclaim good news to the poor, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.” (Luke 4:18-19) This call is as relevant today as it was two thousand years ago. As we remember, we also confront the pressing issues of our day—poverty, systemic racism, climate injustice, gender inequality. The gospel calls us to see the inherent dignity and worth of every human being. Each person, made in the image of God, carries a divine imprint that no injustice can erase. When we see protests against police violence, unfair business practices or the outcry against environmental destruction, we are seeing a world that is crying out for justice, for righteousness, for the fullness of life that God desires for all creation.

Let us also remember the words of Jesus: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27) This peace is not passive; it is the peace of active engagement, of standing up against injustice, of building a world where all can thrive. In our remembering, may we look forward with hope. Not a passive hope that waits for things to change, but an active hope that works for change, that strives for a world where peace is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of justice. Let us remember that every act of love, every step toward reconciliation, every move toward justice is a participation in the very life of God. Blessings, Mark

Prayer

Uplifting God,
we give you thanks for the joy of giving and receiving;
for those special people in our lives who makes us feel rich and cherished;
for those who show us day by day the value of little things.
Most of all, we praise you for your overwhelming and wonderful gifts of life and love and hope,
reflected in your Son Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Commitment for Life

In Zimbabwe there has been an emphasis on advocating for debt relief as Zimbabwe faces international financial pressure. Additionally, efforts to promote gender inclusion and advocate for good governance have continued, with a focus on empowering faith leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue and advocate for their rights. The Christian Aid team has worked with communities to build capacity and enhance resilience methods for planting to ensure a good crop yield. Vhaina, a single mother of six has been trained as a sesame seed farmer by our partners, Sustainable Agriculture Technology (SAT). Zimbabwe has been facing a severe drought, and SAT has been working with over 3,800 farmers to develop weather-resilient crops and create infrastructure to support e-commerce, enabling financial freedom and improving livelihoods. Thanks to this support, Vhaina now has more opportunities and can better provide for her family.

Eco Tip from ARocha

Green your home. Combat climate change and reduce heating costs by identifying and sealing drafts around your home. Find the gaps that let the cold air in and warm air out (think keyholes, letterboxes, cracks around the edges or bottoms of windows and doors, loft hatches, floorboards, etc.) and fix these gaps using the correct materials and online tutorials. Additionally, place foil or radiator panels to reflect heat into your room. Pray for those who might be experiencing the cold this winter.

Drop-in Art Group

Come & explore creatively any time from 2pm – 3.30pm
on Wednesday 27 November @ Broxbourne URC Upper Room

Pastorate Update

Galatians 6:9:

Let us not become weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Dear all,

There have been some lovely Harvest Services taking place in the churches recently which, in a roundabout way, made me think of the above verse. May God bless you as you continue doing so much good in your communities!

From Stepanka

The leadership teams across the pastorate have been looking at smarter working. It's been encouraging to see the openness of the Elders to doing things differently in order to work more effectively. We have agreed to reduce the number of meetings and focus on completing actions before the next meetings. We have also talked about teamwork and supporting each other. Twenty-three people came together to enjoy a three-course Sunday roast lunch at the Highland Restaurant in Broxbourne on Sunday 6th October! It was a nice time of fellowship over some lovely food. We very much welcome your feedback, which will help us organise next year's Pastorate lunch.

Since the website has gone live, I have been receiving all kinds of interesting emails from the public. The secretary from the George Fuller Club for the Blind and Visually Impaired in the Borough of Broxbourne has recently contacted us to ask some questions about our groups and to say that their club meets on the third Monday of each month in the Bushby Hall, 8 Wharf Road in Wormley from 7 to 9pm with fantastic entertainment, refreshments, etc. and it's all FREE. I just wanted to share this information in case there is anyone you know who would find the club of interest.

As I have mentioned in Issue 2, I also work one day a week at All Nations Christian College. The college has been hit hard financially since Covid, but rather than just asking people to donate money, they (and that includes many of the current students) work hard to support the college in different ways. There is the All Nations' Coffee and Book Shop, open to all visitors, usually every Wednesday and Friday 2-5pm. Please see this Facebook page for current information: <https://www.facebook.com/AllNationsCoffeeAndBookShop/>, and the attached leaflet. All Nations also offer Afternoon Teas and Retreats. If you are interested to find out more, please see these links: <https://www.allnations.ac.uk/events/afternoon-tea> or <https://www.allnations.ac.uk/events/retreats>

From Mark

As part of the ongoing efforts at Hertford to promote faith within the community and those who use the church, we've had the privilege of enjoying a full year of the first pieces of art from our 'Art in Plain Sight' project. Each month, a new print has drawn our attention, inspiring reflection and deepening our connection with God through art. This initiative from the Synod Discipleship team has truly brought life and discussion to those who use our hall. We are excited for what the coming months will bring as we continue to explore this visual journey together. We plan to put on a full

display of the artwork in the church sanctuary in the near future once we work out the logistics of how to easily and aesthetically display one year of artwork.

The monthly Hot Potato Lunch has quickly become a highlight for so many of us. Each gathering has been filled with warmth, not just from the jacket potatoes, but from the lively conversations and the sense of community that fills the room. Seeing familiar faces come together in such a simple yet meaningful way reminds us of the power of hospitality. It's been wonderful to witness people connecting over a meal, sharing stories, and deepening friendships. I am grateful for the support this outreach continues to receive from both the church family and the wider community. The Hot Potato Lunch takes place on the second Thursday of each month at Hertford. Come along next month to experience the warmth of both the meal and the connection we share!

Our recent Coffee Morning at Cheshunt was a wonderful success. We were pleased to see a good turnout from the local community. There was a genuine sense of camaraderie, as people gathered not just to share coffee and cake, but also to talk, find out more about the church, strengthen bonds, and build new friendships. Thank you to everyone who has made the morning such a meaningful part of our church life.

The 'Time to Remember' service at Broxbourne was a deeply moving experience, filled with quiet reflection and heartfelt moments of remembrance. It has been humbling to hear the feedback of how this service has resonated with those who attended, offering a space where we can honour our loved ones and find comfort as we remember those who have passed on. Our time in contemplation was followed by warm conversations over refreshments. The support and understanding shared among us reminded us that even in loss, we are never alone. We are grateful for how this service continues to offer comfort and hope. We continue to offer this space for remembrance and support for anyone in need of comfort.

I wanted to inform you that I have two upcoming appointments at Moorfields Eye Hospital on the 28th of October and the 6th of November to address an issue with cataracts and potentially my retina and macula. While I hope for a smooth process, this may impact my availability over the coming weeks. I appreciate your understanding and will keep you updated as necessary.

Bible Passage for Thought and Prayer

In a world where harmony feels increasingly out of reach, especially as we consider the conflicts in the Middle East, Ukraine, and Sudan, we turn to scripture for guidance. What does it mean to be peacemakers in our time? How can we embody God's call to love and justice in such troubling circumstances? Reflect on this verse as we hold these questions in prayer:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

As we reflect on this verse, I pray we ask ourselves how we can be peacemakers in our communities and the world. In our prayers and our actions, may we strive to live in God's peace.

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of community, creativity, and peace. As we reflect on your call to be peacemakers, guide our hearts and actions in the way of love and justice. Strengthen us in your grace as we seek to follow you. Amen.

Blessings, Stepanka and Mark