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March 2025

Isn't it strange how things go in 3s. First the very gripping film 'Conclave' set partly in the Sistine Chapel. Next a thought-provoking article from Alan Earl. And thirdly a rather intriguing talk at the Art Society which meets at the Spotlight on the Last Judgement by Michaelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Apparently there are plenty of reasons to believe that Michaelangelo already knew about Copernicus's realisation that the earth moves around the sun—hence he shows Jesus in front of the sun, looking rather like Apollo, with no line drawn across to divide the sinners from the saved.

Dear Friends,

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited into a time of reflection, renewal, and preparation. This is a season to draw nearer to God, to examine our hearts, and to deepen our commitment to Christ's way of love and service. Lent is not only a personal journey but a shared one—an opportunity for us as a church community to walk together in faith and discipleship.

Just as Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness seeking God's will, we, too, are called to this season with openness, seeking clarity and transformation. For some, this may be a time of quiet prayer and contemplation; for others, it may be a time for action—offering our time and gifts in service to one another.

As we journey through Lent, I encourage each of us to ask:
Where is God calling me to grow?
How can I serve my church family and community more fully?
What small acts of kindness and faithfulness might bring greater harmony to our shared life?

Our churches thrive when we come together in worship, welcome, and care. There are many small but important ways we can support one another—helping to preserve our church's history, ensuring hospitality remains at the heart of our gatherings, assisting with pastoral care, or simply offering a helping hand where needed. If you see a need or feel called to serve in some way, please speak with me or one of the elders.

At the heart of Lent is prayer—our time with God that sustains and shapes us. I encourage each of us to set aside moments of stillness each day, bringing before God our hopes, struggles, and gratitude. As a church, we will continue to pray together in our services and gatherings, seeking renewal in our lives, our community, and the world.

May this season draw us closer to Christ and to one another, preparing our hearts for the joy of Easter.

With every blessing,
Mark

Jill writes:

Drop in art group

Tuesday 11th March 2-3.30 pm

Broxbourne URC lounge

Come along to spend time exploring a variety of creative art materials at your leisure.

Worship half hour

Friday 14th March 1-1.30 pm

Broxbourne URC lounge

A time of worship including Celtic style liturgy, readings and prayers.

Worship this month



March 2nd 10.30 am	Brox URC	God's promise to Jacob Chris Hall
5th 8pm	Brox URC	Ash Wednesday Pastorate Service Revd Mark Robinson
7 th 11.00am 7.30 pm for 8pm	St Augustine's Broxbourne Hoddeddon Baptist Church	World Day of Prayer Leaders
9th 10.30 am	Brox URC	God is faithful Kathleen Laing
16th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Communion Revd Mark Robinson Bring and share lunch
23rd 10.30 am	Brox URC	David Ronco
30th 10.30am	Brox URC	Mothering Sunday Natasha and Jill

REGULAR CHURCH ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR DIARY

COMET Please come along if you enjoy togetherness - that is meeting friends over a cuppa in the church hall and having a chat and possibly a game of Rummikub. There are occasionally special sessions such as fish and chips. It is on Mondays, 2-4pm, in the church hall.

SHORT MAT BOWLS Every Thursday evening in the church hall. Please speak to Alan Earl if you would like to join.

AFTER EIGHTS is now open to gentlemen as well as ladies. A programme of interesting talks in the church hall on the first Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm. If you are interested in attending a meeting please speak to Brenda McAuliffe or Marion Hall - or just go along at 2.00pm.

REGENT REGALE an informal get-together for gentlemen on the last Wednesday of the month.

PRAYER GATHERING every Wednesday at 8pm via Zoom for approximately 45 minutes. All are welcome to come and pray silently or aloud, or to be still and enjoy an oasis of peace - please contact Rosemary Woodall for further information email rosemary.woodall@ntlworld.com or to be included in the circulation list.

1888-1969

Despite the inspiration of a new building and the outstanding ministries of the Rev. W. Ellis and the Rev. S.T. Williams, the Church continued to have comparatively short ministries with occasional interregnums until 1888 when the Rev. John C. Evans accepted a call to Hoddesdon. His ministry was to last 42 years. Mr. Evans had a long and successful ministry and he and his wife were outstanding members of the community and district, especially during the First World War. He continued the missionary connection by serving on the board of the London Missionary Society.

During the early years in the little chapel in Ware Road, music was supplied after some time by a few musicians in a small gallery, although some of the strict worshippers felt that even violins and flutes were detrimental to their spiritual welfare. Similar musical accompaniment must have led the singing during the first years of the new chapel in the High Street since the first harmonium was not purchased until the ministry of Mr. Vine between 1859 and 1867. The pipe organ was installed in 1902 and served the church until it was replaced by a smaller organ and piano.

In 1959 a firm of local estate agents wrote to say that they had a client who was interested in buying the church site. At the time the congregation was small and the cost of maintaining the premises was an impossible drain on the finances of the church. This letter prompted members to look for another site where a church could be built and enquires were made of various sources. The Rev. P.L. Sissons, the minister at the time, asked for help from the local Council but it was not able to assist.

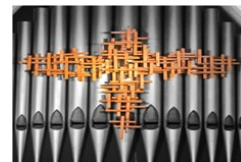
In 1964 it was agreed that the church should look for a site in Broxbourne. Shortly afterwards 99, High Road, Broxbourne, which had a large garden, came onto the market and met the requirements of the church. It was purchased in September 1964 with the help of a loan from a bank. In 1965 the original building was due to be bought by a development company but, owing to delays in obtaining planning permission, the sale was not completed until August 1967. Mr. G.A.J Matthews was appointed architect for the new building and part of the garden in Broxbourne was sold as the site was too large.

The Hoddesdon buildings were demolished, with other properties, for the building of Fawkon Walk shopping precinct, which has since been re-developed again. A well, thirty feet deep, with a concrete cap, was found under the pews- a reminder of the time when the site was occupied by a public house. Some of the pews were later used for the stand of Hoddesdon Town Football Club.

It was in July 1967 that the church moved from Hoddesdon to 99, High Road, Broxbourne, as a temporary measure. Services were held in the largest room and another room was used as a vestry and for small meetings. The Junior Church met in the upstairs rooms. The effect of meeting in such a compact area was to bring the fellowship together so that it was ready for the new church.

The builders started work on the new church in January 1968 and the foundation stone was laid on Sunday April 7th by the Rev. C.J. Buckingham, M.A., Moderator of the Eastern Province of the Congregational Church in England and Wales. The Opening and Dedication Service was held on Saturday, 19th March, 1969. The door was officially opened by Mr. H.J. Jones, the Church Secretary, and the sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. A.R. Vine, a past president of the Congregational Church. The church was full to capacity and the service relayed to the overflow gathering in the hall downstairs. The Rev. P.L. Sissons conducted the services on the following day.

An outstanding feature of the new church is the central cross, made up of many small crosses. It was designed by a local sculptor who also designed the font. The cross caused much discussion and the congregation required the sculptor to modify it as the original was too square and not sufficiently cross shaped. Since the installation of the screen the cross has been in its current location attached to the organ pipes.



Earlier the Crossbrook Street, Cheshunt, Congregational Church had been closed and the site sold. The Trustees,

the Hertfordshire Congregational Union (Incorporated), decided to give the proceeds and the manse to Broxbourne. This ensured that the new church was opened without any debts and received a capital sum. The new building is in the shape of a tent and has several meeting rooms. At the beginning of the current century the church was expanded with additional rooms and a lift.

For your diary:

March 6th Joint Elders Meeting
March 7th World Day of Prayer
March 12th Elders Meeting
March 16th Bring and Share lunch after the service

A reminder from Jill—please look at the website below to find out more about Commitment for Life

URC Commitment for Life <re-2JB1-21PC4-2VWNXS-C218J@urc-news.org.uk>

Reminder: World Day of Prayer 7th March 2025

Prepared by the women of the Cook Islands. Very different from last year's service which was written by the women of Palestine.

St Augustine's C of E Church, Broxbourne is hosting the morning service at 11am, followed by lunch

7:30 for 8pm Hoddesdon Baptist Church, Old Essex Road, Hoddesdon, EN11 8HX (same service)
The service is based on Psalm 139 with the theme 'I made you wonderful'. Our representative is Natasha Appiah.

Clothing Collection for Refugees

Churches Together are still collecting coats—as their clients in the hotel are moving on they find their supplies are dwindling again. Please donate a warm coat if you can.

Broxbourne Food Bank Please remember to bring donations to the foodbank as our communion offering.



IN OUR CHURCH HALL— MARCH

4th 2.00pm After Eights 'Family Memories Through Precious Items' Tim Turner
18th 7.30pm Friends of Lowewood talk on 'Lost Inns and Pubs of Broxbourne and Wormley' D Dent
22nd 7.30pm Hoddesdon Music Club Ensemble Renard (wind quintet) Music includes Mendelssohn
25th 8.00pm SE Herts RSPB Adventures in nature photography: from Rulmar to Fungi to Phalarope.
Contact: se_herts_rspb@yahoo.co.uk

Alan Earl writes:

A Short Sermon

I recently had a short stay in hospital with little to do except stare up at the ward clock, that at times appeared to move slowly and others fast, but always constantly telling the truth.

My favourite artist is Michaelangelo who, you may not know, was a deeply religious person. He had a very privileged and spoilt upbringing under the Medici family but he later had to hide from the assassin's knife.

Commissioned to paint the Last Judgement by Julios II over four turbulent years he had God at the centre with Heaven, the angels and the saved above and below, hell and the Damned.

Also in the centre is a self-portrait where he is hanging like an empty bag awaiting judgement. Will he be judged up or down?

Dorothy writes:

Job vacancy

We are seeking a motivated and enthusiastic Children's and Youth Worker to work with our children's team volunteers. This position is essential for the spiritual development of children and youth, supporting their faith journeys and fostering a welcoming, inclusive environment for all families. A rare and flexible opportunity for someone with a love of God, of children and of church.

Hours: 16 hours – negotiable and flexible, including some Sunday mornings and mid-week and evening events

Salary: £16 per hour

2 weeks paid leave per year. National Insurance (NI) and pension contributions included

Location: Broxbourne United Reformed Church, Mill Lane, Broxbourne EN10 7BQ

Contract: Three-year fixed-term.

Responsible to the Minister, working with him, elders and volunteer members.

Over time, the role will extend across our pastorate: Broxbourne and Hertford United Reformed Churches and Cheshunt Free Church.

We'd love to chat with you about creating a bespoke role that draws on your gifts.

Please apply for an application pack to our PASTORATE ADMINISTRATOR, Mrs. Stepanka Moysey at urcnlvg@gmail.com

For informal inquiries, please contact revdmarkr@gmail.com.

The closing date for applications is noon on Wednesday 23rd April

Interviews will be held in the week beginning 28th April.

Residence required - please speak to David Davies (Churches Together) if you are aware of a one-bedroom flat being available in the Hoddesdon area.

Volunteer Site Manager and Project Officer

We are seeking a new part-time volunteer site manager to join our community project based at the Quaker meeting house in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. Living on-site in a rent-free cottage, you will be supporting the delivery of our project and looking after our beautiful historic site and garden.

Engaging with the local community, you will help to expand the project, raise funds and develop strong relationships with local residents. Applicants are likely to have experience of the charitable, arts, education or faith sectors and will be open to an adventurous opportunity to live and work in the heart of a vibrant community.

The role is open to people of all faiths and people of no particular faith. Initially offered as a 12-month contract. To request a job pack or for further information please email: peacecottagehub@gmail.com Closing date for applications: Monday 24 February 2025, 5pm. The Peace Cottage Community Hub is part of Hertford & Hitchin Quaker Area Meeting (registered charity: 1131894)

March to the May Market



Here we are again in winter, heading towards Spring.

So, you all know that this is the month when we begin to advertise our May Market.

As usual this will take place on the first May Bank Holiday Monday, which this year is Monday 5th May.

The change of plan from last year seemed to suit many folk so we have decided to go with it again this year.

Times are **1.30-4.30pm** so afternoon with a Cream Tea, Plant stall etc.

Lots of help required please for our Church stalls, and provision of home produce, vintage and toys, the latter of which we hope our newest Junior Church youngsters will help us with.

We will be inviting more outside stall holders to fill the gaps, our Hall and the Upper Room this year. We are looking to use the lounge for more seating space for teas. We have already had interest from craft sellers, so we are feeling very positive.

Watch this space for more information in next month's magazine.

The Bites and Woodalls.

Mark writes:

March Prayer Themes

As we journey through Lent, our prayers this month will focus on reflection, renewal, and preparation for the joy of Easter. Each week invites us to draw closer to God, examine our hearts, and seek transformation in our lives and communities.

Week 1: Seeking God's Guidance

Scripture: "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths." (Psalm 25:4)

Focus: Pray for wisdom and discernment as we navigate our Lenten journey. Ask God to reveal areas in our lives where we need growth and renewal.

Week 2: Turning Back to God

Scripture: "Return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love." (Joel 2:13)

Focus: Lent calls us to realign our hearts with God's. This week, pray for the courage to let go of anything that draws you away from God's love. Ask for a spirit of renewal and a deeper awareness of God's grace at work in your life.

Week 3: Compassion and Service

Scripture: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

Focus: Pray for a heart of compassion, looking for ways to serve others in small and meaningful ways. Ask God to show us where our help is needed in our church and community.

Week 4: Trusting in God's Promise

Scripture: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." (John 11:25)

Focus: As we approach Holy Week, pray for renewed faith in God's promises. Ask for the grace to trust in God's love, even in times of uncertainty, and to live in the hope of the resurrection.

I pray that these prayer themes guide us as we journey toward Easter, seeking God's presence at every step.

