



APRIL 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

We aim to be an active Christian Church open to all, meeting together for worship, teaching and prayer and offering loving care and support to all. We work alongside other Christian Churches reaching out into the Community with love.

Dear Friends

Easter has always been a time of celebration for me, even from childhood. I remember a small family tradition that we as children would do every Easter Sunday before leaving home for church. We would crack an egg into a glass of water, letting a small bit of egg white swirl and settle, and we'd look at the shapes it made — a simple, playful way to see who had the most interesting shape and marvel at what they looked like. As a child, it was fun and mysterious. As I've grown older, I've come to see that cracking of the egg that we did as children as something more. It pointed to something deeper — the breaking open of the tomb, the releasing of new life, the beginning of something that changed everything.

Easter is not just a celebration of an event long ago. It is a proclamation that the life, death, and resurrection of Christ has redefined reality. It is God's act of power, love, and truth — breaking through death itself, not just for Christ but for all creation.

Over the years, I've spoken with many people about what Easter means, and two conversations stand out. One was with a man who said he could not believe in resurrection because it didn't happen again. "If it really happened," he said, "why hasn't it happened more than once?" I wasn't sure if he was joking, or if he truly felt that a singular event, no matter how astonishing, was not enough. The other was a Muslim friend who sincerely believed, as he had been taught, that God would never allow Jesus to suffer on the cross. He believed someone else was put in Jesus' place, that Jesus was spared, and therefore the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ, as Christians understand it, never happened.

Both of these views — although different — miss the nature and purpose of Easter. They miss what God has done, and who God is.

The first view treats resurrection as something that must be repeated to be real. But God's work in Christ is not a spectacle or a performance. It is a decisive act — once for all — that breaks the power of sin and death. Resurrection is not about repetition, but revelation. The empty tomb is not less true because it happened once; it is all the more powerful because in that one moment, everything changed. It is not that resurrection needs to happen again for each person to believe — it is that the resurrection has happened, and because it has, life is now opened up to all.

The second view — that God would not allow Christ to suffer — misunderstands the nature of God's love and the mission of Christ. The cross was not a mistake or a moment of divine absence. It was the place where God's love was fully revealed — willing to bear suffering, to enter the depths of human pain, to redeem what was lost. Jesus did not avoid the cross; he embraced it. Not because suffering is good, but because love is stronger than suffering, stronger than death. The resurrection is God's vindication of Christ's mission — confirming that the cross was not defeat, but victory.

At Easter, we are invited not only to remember what happened but to live in its light. Resurrection is not a past event but a present reality. The risen Christ calls each of us into new life — a life shaped by forgiveness, hope, and love that does not run away from pain, but faces it with courage.

I encourage you to reflect on what Easter means in your life today. Where do you need the life of Christ to break in? Where can you carry the light of resurrection to others?

Christ is risen. New life has begun.

With Easter joy,

Mark

April Prayer Themes

This month we move from the solemnity of Lent into the celebration of Easter.

Week 1: Embracing God's Mercy

Scripture: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for God's compassions never fail. They are new every morning." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Focus: As Lent draws to a close, we reflect on God's unfailing mercy. Let us pray for hearts open to receiving and sharing this mercy. Let us ask God to help us forgive others, and ourselves, and to live each day as a fresh start in God's grace.

Week 2: The Way of the Cross

Scripture: “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:8)

Focus: In this Holy Week, especially as we approach Good Friday, let us pray with gratitude for Christ’s sacrifice. Let us reflect on the depth of God’s love shown at the cross. And let us ask for the strength to carry our own crosses with faith and humility, following Jesus’ example of surrender and love.

Week 3: At the Foot of the Cross

Scripture: “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering... and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Focus: As we walk through the solemn days of Holy Week, especially Good Friday, let us pray in reverence at the foot of the Cross. Reflect on Christ’s suffering and love poured out for the world. On Holy Saturday, let us wait in hope, trusting that even in silence and sorrow, God is at work. Ask for a heart that can fully embrace the mystery of Christ’s sacrifice and the hope that is to come.

Week 4: Rejoicing in the Resurrection

Scripture: “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.” (Matthew 28:6)

Focus: Easter is here! Let us celebrate the victory of life over death. Pray for joy and renewed hope in Christ’s resurrection. Let us ask for the power of the Risen Christ to fill our lives, bringing light to every place and hope to every struggle.

Week 5: Living as Easter People

Scripture: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3)

Focus: Easter **is** not just a day—it is a way of life. This week, let us pray for the courage to live as Easter people: bringing hope, joy, and light into the world. Ask God to guide us in sharing the good news through our words, actions, and love for others.

PRAYERS

Continue to pray for Bob, Fran and their family.

Continue to pray for Jan Carter

Continue to pray for Shirley Sloan

Continue to pray for Janet and Trevor Williams' daughter, Jo, as she continues her fight against cancer.
Pray for people known to you that they may know God's love and strength

PASTORATE UPDATE

Psalm 33: 20-21

*We wait in hope for the Lord, he is our help and our shield.
In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name*

Dear all,

Welcome to the 10th issue of the Pastorate Update. We hope you are finding them helpful and informative.

From Stepanka

I had a very nice holiday in February but had sadly caught a flu virus on return. I am much better now and thankful that Spring Equinox (warmer weather, hopefully) is coming soon!

We had a good Elders' Meeting at Broxbourne last week. The meeting lasted 3 hours – there was a lot to discuss! The Joint Elders' meeting needed to be postponed and will now take place on 27th March. These meetings are great for thinking through any pastorate issues and planning any future events together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The advertisement for a Children's and Youth Worker is now live and the application pack ready. Applications close at noon on 23rd April. We have tried to advertise it widely, but please spread the word and pass it on to any individuals or organisations that you think may be interested. Please also continue to pray that the right person will be found.

The safeguarding piece I am currently working on has, so far, presented many challenges. However I am happy to report that I have completed and submitted the Safeguarding Annual Reports and have created a spreadsheet of the Safeguarding training and DBS checks needed for all our churches. I have also completed training for the DDC system that the URC are using to process DBS applications.

I haven't been able to contact more of you about the online Safeguarding Foundation Level training, because there are a couple of glitches in this course that need fixing. Many thanks to Hertford Elders for raising this! I will let you know as soon as this is rectified by the URC Safeguarding team. I am also awaiting confirmation from the Synod Safeguarding Officer that I can

conduct training sessions at Broxbourne (by projecting the training onto the screen) since the SSO is unable to offer in-house training this year due to her extremely busy schedule

I will start contacting people requiring DBS Certification shortly. The process is very straightforward and takes about 30 minutes in total. I will explain everything in my email to you.

I have also attached the Emergency Contact Form for Broxbourne. The form (you can choose between an e-form or a hard copy) is in place so that your Elders and Mark know who to contact in an emergency. It is in your interests to ensure that these details are available to them. All details are kept securely and will only be used for that purpose. This form has been offered to Hertford and Cheshunt for their use too.

Lastly I would like to let you know that All Nations College is holding a 60th Celebration of Mission training on 31st May 13.30 – 17.30. An afternoon tea is included in the ticket price which is £12 for adults and £6 for children. It's bound to be a wonderful occasion.

From Mark

As we continue our journey through Lent we reflect on God's call to renewal, repentance and service. It has been a joy to gather in worship, fellowship and acts of service, witnessing the ways in which God is at work among us.

Pause for Thought – a new opportunity at Hertford.

As part of URC Hertford's Open House, we are introducing Pause for Thought, a short reflective time of prayer, scripture and stillness. Every third Thursday at about 10.30 am this is an opportunity to pause, breathe and reflect in the midst of a busy world. Whether you come to listen, pray, or simply sit in God's presence, all are welcome.

Ash Wednesday at URC Broxbourne. Our service was a meaningful time of reflection and renewal. The evening service format worked well, creating a peaceful and contemplative atmosphere. However, attendance was very low. I wonder whether moving to an earlier time might allow more of our community to participate. As we look ahead, I would welcome your thoughts on what timings might work best for future years.

Freshening up at Cheshunt. A big thankyou to all who helped in the recent clean-up at Cheshunt. Your time and effort have given the church a fresh look, and it was wonderful to see the spirit of teamwork in action. We are planning a second clean-up session, so if you are able to lend a hand, your help would be greatly appreciated.

Bible Passage for Reflection.

“Forget the former things: do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up, do you not perceive it?”- Isaiah 43: 18-19.

As we journey through Lent, how is God at work doing something new in our lives, our churches, and our communities? How can we open our hearts to embrace this newness with faith and hope?

Prayer.

Gracious God. As we walk through this season of Lent, draw us closer to You. Renew our hearts, refresh our spirits and help us to see Your presence in our daily lives. May we be strengthened to serve, to reflect, and to grow in love and faith. Guide us in our journey, and lead us ever closer to Your light – Amen.

PART-TIME CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH WORKER

Based at Broxbourne URC Mill Lane EN10 7BQ

As a church family we are offering an opportunity for someone with a love of God, children and church. We seek a motivated and enthusiastic Children’s and Youth Worker who can help us nurture and grow the existing work with our young people. We'd love to chat with you about creating a bespoke role that draws on your gifts.

The details:

16 hours a week – negotiable and flexible, including some Sunday mornings and mid-week and evening events. Three-year fixed-term, £16 per hour.

Interested?

Apply for an application pack to our Pastorate Administrator, Mrs. Stepanka Moysey at urcnlv@gmail.com

For informal inquiries, please contact the Revd Mark Robinson
revdmarkr@gmail.com.

The closing date for applications is **noon on Wednesday 23rd April**.
Interviews will be held in the week beginning 28th April.

**The following two articles are from Hertford and District Churches
Together, advertising some events organised for Easter**

This year, Hertford Baptist Church are arranging the Good Friday Walk of Witness and this will be different from previous years. We will not be serving hot drinks and buns from the URC but will be part of one of the processions gathering from different parts of Hertford to meet together at Hartham Common for a short act of worship.

Good Friday Walk of Witness, 10-11.30am, 18th April 2025

This year we are looking to increase the impact and visibility of our Churches Together Walk of Witness. We want to encourage Christians from across the town to leave our churches in significant numbers and bring the message of Easter to Hertford.

This year there will be three groups walking through the town, carrying large crosses and giving out chocolates, hot-cross buns and a small card with a link to a gospel presentation, explaining the meaning of Easter and why Jesus had to die.

The three groups will gather at three different locations between 10.00am-10.15am:

- Hertford Methodist Church, Ware Road
- All Saints Church, Gasgoyne Way
- United Reform Church, Cowbridge

The groups carry crosses will converge on Hartham common, near to the children's playground, by 11am, for a short time of worship, Bible readings and prayer.

Join us and play a part in sharing God's great love with Hertford this Easter. Simply turn up between 10.00am – 10.15am on Friday 18th April at one of the locations.

One Friday: A journey towards Easter
The story of Holy Week in watercolours by Jenny Hawke

Monday 14 April - Friday 18 April (Good Friday) at St Andrew's Church

Artist and writer Jenny Hawke (1954-2023) created a moving and thought-provoking series of watercolour paintings entitled One Friday. Her pictures depict the events of Holy Week, from Jesus' betrayal up to his death and resurrection. We will be displaying large-format prints of these motifs at St Andrew's Church during Holy Week. There will be an optional written reflection on each picture, or you can simply take in Jenny Hawke's visual interpretations of the themes.

There are fourteen paintings in the One Friday series – the same number as the traditional Stations of the Cross. But One Friday goes beyond simply narrating the story of Christ's Passion. Each motif carries a one-word title, such as Fear, Mercy or Tomorrow, and the representations range from the literal (a hammer and nails) to the near-abstract; the motif Tears, for example, is a poignant cascade of pale blues inspired by the idea of the whole of creation weeping.

The traditional Stations of the Cross came about as a way of enabling those who could not make it to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to take their own small walk of faith in their locality. The One Friday exhibition, in a modern-day twist, now invites you to step into the unfolding drama of the Passion story and immerse yourself visually in the events of Holy Week.

The pictures will be on show at St Andrew's Church from Monday 14 April until Friday 18 April (Good Friday), during the church's normal opening hours.

Congratulations to Cheryl Jackson!

The Mayor of Hertford has recognised and celebrated Hertford's community heroes, as nominated by the people of Hertford. The Winners of the Mayor's Community Awards were celebrated and presented with a certificate last week at the Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 20th March 2025.

The Mayor's Community Awards:

Individual: Cheryl Jackson - recognised for her hard work and dedication in supporting people through the Hertford and District Food Bank.



You will all have heard about this no doubt by the time you get your magazine but here is an email that Mike Excell sent out to Elders and the Fabric Committee on Wednesday 26th March which clearly tells us why a large section of the church has been cordoned off.

GOOD NEWS AND DANGEROUS NEWS

First the ‘dangerous’ bit. The front area of the church (ie lectern, pulpit etc) has been cordoned off. If anyone wishes to access the kitchen - store room - toilet area, this **MUST be done by going down the left hand side of the church and through the vestry, or via the outside door at the end of the side garden.**

This is necessary as we have discovered this morning that a large and heavy organ pipe assembly, located on the right hand side of the instrument, has become detached from the wall and is resting at an angle against the main organ casing. We don’t know when this happened, but it fell in a very fortunate position and it’s held in place by a very small and accidental location. If this gives way – and it could happen without warning – the assembly would topple over the balcony and would almost certainly kill anyone passing underneath it.

Here’s the background story - and the good news. Prompted by David Emsley, I contacted Andrew Stevens, who maintains a number of church organs in the area, for a second opinion on the prognosis for the URC organ. Andrew came in this morning and his verdict is that the bellows can after all be repaired economically, to the extent that we could expect another 10-15 years from the instrument. This will probably be a two day job (he commented on the pedigree of the organ and said it’s definitely worth repairing – evidently the builder’s magnum opus is the organ at Southwark Cathedral!).

He also discovered the H & S hazard, and he won't get onto the bellows repair until after he has fixed this, which he hopes to do before Easter. The assembly is extremely heavy and moving it back into position will require a crew of burly men - which he will recruit. Until this is done we will have to restrict services to the 'safe' areas of the church. After that and the bellows repair we can look forward to a tuned, serviced and restored (resurrected?!) organ.

PLEASE EVERYONE TAKE THESE WARNINGS SERIOUSLY – WE ARE VERY LUCKY THAT THERE HAS NOT BEEN A SERIOUS AND LIFE THREATENING INCIDENT

DROP IN ART GROUP

Tuesday 8th April, 2 – 3.30pm
Broxbourne URC Lounge.

Come and explore creatively using a selection of art materials including paints, pastels, clay, pencils and paper

USED POSTAGE STAMPS – If you have any used postage stamps, could you please put them in the container at the side of the Church. Shirley is collecting these for the Isobel Hospice.

A few extra dates:

Thursday 10th April – A Foodbank Committee meeting at 1.30 pm in the Church Vestry.

Wednesday 23rd April – AGM of Hertford Civic Society in the Church.

APRIL 2025

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| Apr 2 | 8.00 pm | On-line Prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches |
| Apr 3 | 10.00 am 2.00 pm 7.30 pm | Open House Coffee morning Short mat Bowls Short mat Bowls |
| Apr 6 | 10.30 am | Morning worship led by our Minister, Mark Robinson, to include the Sacrament of Holy Communion and welcome John and Sue Ellis into membership. |
| Apr 7 | 10.00 am | Short Mat Bowls |
| Apr 9 | 8.00 pm | On-line Prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches |
| Apr 10 | 10.00 am 2.00 pm 7.30 pm | Open House Coffee morning – followed by Hot Potato Lunch – all are welcome. Short mat Bowls Short mat Bowls |
| Apr 13 | 10.30 am | Morning Worship - led by TBA |
| Apr 14 | 10.00 am | Short Mat Bowls |
| Apr 16 | 8.00 pm | On-line Prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches |
| Apr 17 | 10.00 am 2.00 pm 7.30 pm | Open House Coffee morning, including Pause for Thought, led by Mark Robinson. Short mat Bowls Short mat Bowls |
| Apr 18 | 10.00 am | Walk of Witness, leave URC about 10-10.15 am. |
| Apr 20 | 10.30 am | Easter Sunday -Morning Service – led by John Ellis |
| Apr 21 | 10.00 am | Short mat Bowls |
| Apr 23 | 8.00 pm | On-line Prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches |
| Apr 24 | 10.00 am 2.00 pm 7.30 pm | Open House Coffee morning Short mat Bowls Short mat Bowls |
| Apr 27 | 10.30 am | Morning Worship – led by Martin Bird, All Saints |
| Apr 28 | 10.00 am | Short mat Bowls |
| Apr 30 | 8.00 pm | On-line Prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches |

***Foodbank opens on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings 10 – 11 am and on Tuesday and Thursday mornings 10.30 – 11.30 am at the Priory, Ware.
Enquiries 07851 708470***

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