

Services in April

6th Worship with Sandra Rose

13th Worship with Martin Wells

20th Worship with Mark Robinson

27th Worship with Anna Erikson



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.

Event

Drop in art afternoon Tuesday 8th April 2-3.30pm Broxbourne URC Lounge
Drop in to explore a selection of art materials at your leisure

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!

The advertisement for a Children's and Youth Worker is now live and the application pack ready! Applications close at noon on 23 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 that I am currently working on has so far presented many challenges. 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. I will let you know as soon as this is rectified by the URC safeguarding team. I am also awaiting a confirmation from the Synod Safeguarding Officer that I can conduct training sessions at Broxbourne URC (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.

Lastly, I would like to let you know that All Nations Christian College is holding a 60th Celebration of Mission Training on 31 May, 13:30 - 17:30. An afternoon tea is included in the price of the tickets, which are only £12 (adult) and £6 (child). Please go to the All Nations website, Events, 60th Anniversary Event (<https://www.allnations.ac.uk/events/60-anniversary-event>) to find out more and to book your tickets. 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 Ash Wednesday 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 timing might work best for future years.

Freshening Up at Cheshunt

A big thank you 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

Advertisement

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

Poem

A walk in my garden

Touch me God
when I walk in my garden,
that I might also touch you.

Reach out to me
through the long branches of the silver birch.

Tap me on my shoulder
as I wander along the straggly hedge.

Come close
if I pause to admire a bird or butterfly.

Shine on my face
when I watch the billowing clouds go by.

Whisper in my ear
while I sit mindfully on the corner bench.

Give me a hug
as I explore newly opened flowers.

Then let me hug you back
before going on my way.

Happy Easter

