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May 2025

There have been various changes to the magazine/newsletter since the morph into a digital version during Covid. The deadline has been somewhat lax and needs to be reintroduced. Stepanka now distributes the magazine and she doesn't work on a Friday. Currently, to have the magazine distributed by the last Sunday of the previous month the editing has to be completed before the Thursday. It would be good to know what readers think of this suggestion.

Grapevine news, advertisements for events, reports and thoughtful articles are always welcome. Sometimes there isn't time or space to include them but there is always the next magazine!



Dear Friends,

“Therefore we have been buried with Christ by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of God, so we too might walk in newness of life.” — Romans 6:4

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed.

These ancient words were first spoken in awe and trembling by those who had walked with Jesus, had witnessed his death yet encountered life anew. In this season of Easter, we affirm a truth that does not deny sorrow or struggle, but meets us within it. Resurrection is not a promise that life will be easy. It is the assurance that even in the hardest places, God is not absent—and that nothing is beyond the reach of new life through God.

To live into resurrection is to trust that God is near in our questions, steady in our waiting, and tender in our weariness. The risen Christ still bears wounds—reminding us that healing does not erase what has been hurt, but transforms it.

We are Easter people. Not because we are without grief or fear, but because we know that love endures, mercy surprises, and life emerges where we least expect it.

As we journey through Eastertide, may this hope accompany us quietly, gently, joyfully. May we know that, in whatever season we find ourselves, God is near—and resurrection is still at work.

With peace and hope,

Mark

Jill writes:

Drop in art group

Tuesday 11th May 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 16th May 1-1.30 pm

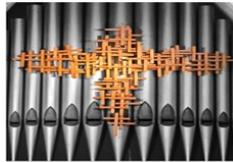
Broxbourne URC lounge

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

Worship this month



May 4th 10.30 am PM	Brox URC	John Ellis May Market setting –up
11th 10.30 am	Brox URC	John Danso Communion Christian Aid Week
18th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Revd Mark Robinson
25th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Revd Martin Legg



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.

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.

BIBLE STUDY Generally fortnightly in the Oasis Room at 2pm on Wednesdays. Speak to Laurence Sinden.



Don't forget to come with friends to the May Market on Monday May 5th from 1.30pm.



Jill writes:

Celtic Christianity

Celtic Christianity is the name given to the way that, originally, the Celts in Britain kept their Christian faith. Nowadays, however, many Christians make use of the Celtic ways in their walk with Christ. The Celts recognised God in every aspect of their lives so, for them, the sacred and the secular were one. They bred saints, took missions and founded monasteries, which often became important centres of learning. The islands of Iona and Lindisfarne became special holy places and are popular now as places of retreat.

The Celts were in tune with the Holy Spirit, which was associated with the wild goose, a bird that moves freely at the call of nature as the Holy Spirit moves freely amongst God's created world. Celtic Christianity finds God in all of creation so encourages a great respect for nature. It also promotes a prayer filled life. As God is with us wherever we are it is easy to join with God in prayer, talking or listening, or just enjoying God.

There are many written prayers in the Celtic tradition that link to all aspects of life and some beautiful prayers of blessing. You might recognise this, taken from St Patrick's breastplate.

Christ within me, Christ beside me
Christ above me, Christ beneath me
Christ to right of me, Christ to left of me
Christ in the eye of all who see me
Christ in the ear of all who hear me



Celtic Christianity encourages people to fight for God, to be energetic in living the way of Christ, yet also advocating peace. The Celts were naturally friendly and hospitable, forging connections in community and supporting the poor, sick and lonely. They looked for Christ in everyone they met and made sure everyone saw Christ in them too.

Once a month I lead a short time of worship, at Broxbourne, which includes Celtic prayers, a scripture reading and a point of learning from Celtic literature. There is also an opportunity to link creatively to nature. Check the magazine for the date each month, usually a Friday at 1.30 pm, and join me if you are interested.

Dates for your diary from Dorothy:

May 10th Concert at Cheshunt

June 8th Anniversary and Gift Day

June 16th Church Meeting and AGM





Christian Aid week 11-17 May

'Climate change has been killing our crops, and this is our food'

Envelopes will be handed out at church on 11 May for return to Dorothy B or one of the Elders.

Meet Aurelia: an inspirational farmer and community leader. Aurelia and her family belong to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' community of the Alta Verapaz region.

The climate crisis and industrial plantations have changed Q'eqchi' land dramatically. Gruelling heat-waves, savage storms and unpredictable seasons are ravaging farms. Industrial agriculture is taking over the last of the region's natural resources to feed the world's richest countries.

Many of the vital crops that Aurelia depends on are withering and dying before her eyes. She tries to grow a range of crops so she can provide her family with a bal-

anced diet that contains the vitamins and minerals they need to thrive. In this way, Aurelia can protect her loved ones from malnutrition and ill health. But as increasingly intense conditions kill her crops, Aurelia's ability to safeguard her family slips away.

Aurelia's observed many impacts of the climate crisis, including extended dry seasons, the degradation of soil, contaminated water and a decreasing diversity of plants and crops.

With funding from Christian Aid, Congcoop supports communities to return to Indigenous farming practices and adopt agroecological approaches that conserve their land, culture and livelihood. Agroecology, put simply, is farming in a sustainable way that works with, not against, nature. It's the application of ecological principles in farming – a blend of ancient and modern wisdom.

Kathleen Lord is doing a sponsored walk: <https://fundraise.christianaid.org.uk/challenge-2025/kathleens-challenge>

IN OUR CHURCH HALL — MAY

- 6th 2.00pm After Eights Interesting London Houses Dave Willetts
- 17th 7.45pm Hoddesdon Music Club Alistair Penman—saxophone, Jonathan Pease—piano. Debussy, Satie and Demersseman.
- 20th 8.00 pm Friends of Lowewood The Life and Times and History of the Pearly Kings and Queens.
- 27th 7.30pm SE Herts RSPB Brian Legg 'Heartwood Forest-a transformed landscape and nature's response'.

Contact: se_herts_rspb@yahoo.co.uk

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



GRAPEVINE



Romans 6:8-9

*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.
For we know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again.*

Dear all,

We hope you have had a wonderful Easter. As we journey through this season together, we pray that the light and hope of the resurrection continues to fill our hearts with renewed life. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

From Stepanka

We had several important **meetings** over the last few weeks – the Joint Elders meeting on 27th March, Extraordinary Church meeting in Broxbourne on 15th April and Hertford Elders meeting on 17th April. All three meetings had positive outcomes. We are grateful to the elders and church members for their continued support of their churches and the pastorate!

Applications for the **Children's and Youth Worker** are still being accepted until tomorrow. If you know of any last minute candidates that may be suitable, please put them in touch with me or Mark. Please continue to pray for the right person to be appointed.

The **safeguarding** training package has now been updated and those who selected to do the Safeguarding Foundation Level training online have now been emailed the link to complete the training. Thank you to those of you who have already finished their DBS applications. Please note that the safeguarding piece needs to be completed as much as possible before the end of June 2025 (when my 4 extra hours a week for safeguarding will cease). Your commitment to this process is very much appreciated.

And finally just a reminder that All Nations College is holding a **60th Celebration of Mission Training** on 31 May, 13:30 – 17:30. Please go to <https://www.allnations.ac.uk/events/60-anniversary-event> to find out more and to book your tickets.

From Mark

Throughout Holy Week, I shared **daily reflections** across our pastorate. My hope was that these simple moments of pause would offer space to draw closer to Christ in the journey toward the cross. I hope they were a meaningful companion for you through the sacred days leading up to Easter.

Earlier this month, on Sunday 6th April, we were delighted to welcome **two new members at Hertford**. Their commitment to the life of the church is a sign of renewal and growth, and we give thanks for their presence among us.

On **Maundy Thursday**, we came together at Broxbourne for a reflective communion service. Thank you to all who attended, participated and helped create spaces of welcome, togetherness, and shared faith.

Looking ahead, don't miss the upcoming **Craft & Plant Market at Broxbourne** on Bank Holiday Monday, 5th May, from 1:30pm to 4:30pm. With plants, crafts, cream teas, and more, it promises to be a wonderful community event. Admission is free, and all are welcome.

As part of our ongoing harmony theme, we're excited to host a **Live Music Event at Cheshunt** on Saturday 10th May at 2:00pm. Yinka Williams, a celebrated professional singer and daughter of Cheshunt elder Leah, will be performing a Motown collection. The event is free and open to all—please do bring friends and family and join us in this joyful celebration of music, community, and light refreshments. Please see the attached flyer.

May the message of resurrection continue to stir hope within us throughout this Easter season.

Bible Passage for Reflection

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.” – Colossians 3:16

How might we allow Christ's word to dwell deeply within us—not only during Holy Week and Easter, but in our daily living?

Prayer

Loving and faithful God,

Thank you for the journey through Holy Week and for the light of Easter that calls us into renewed life.

As we continue forward, may our lives speak of your love.

Help us to listen well, to serve with joy, and to live in harmony with one another.

May our gatherings, reflections, and celebrations be shaped by your presence among us, and may we carry your peace into the season ahead.

~ Amen

We hosted a movie night on a club night this term and invited some new friends from our contact work along with some from Hertford YL, we had a great turn out with over 20 kids with 7 new attendee's come and watch Big hero 6 (an epic movie) which was very well received and we also got to meet some of the parents which is harder than you would think to do, they where very impressed with YL and asked what else we do and how often we run them.

We have had a great time studying the story of Moses, from his birth all the way through to entering into the promised land. There have been many great questions and conversations throughout these times and we have all learned new things young and old alike.

It is great to see such a hunger for the truth and to relate to biblical characters stories, keeping this fun has always kept us on our toes but with not all who attend are yet Christian but still feel heard and free to ask questions. We love sharing our faith with our young people and often pray with and for them.



We are still praying and looking for help to reach our financial goal this year. One of the ways we are looking to be raising the money is our wing-a-thon where we are asking people to sponsor our youth and or leaders per chicken wing they eat in the time given to raise money for camp spots and the area. This, while being fun and yummy, is super important for the continued work of YL in Hoddesdon, This includes hours of contact work, one to ones, training and care for leaders, Club prep and execution, Campaigners (our bible study) planning and execution and much more.

Thankyou for partnering with us and equipping us to share the gospel with this generation.

From the Commitment for Life newsletter: When we went to Zimbabwe recently, we met up with Sostina Takure, who co-ordinates the Zimbabwe ACT Alliance Forum.

Sostina told us about just how much she loves working with the ACT Alliance. ACT Alliance is faith based, and as a pastor's wife, Sostina feels right at home. She co-ordinates the efforts to assist people who are most at risk in Zimbabwe. When Hurricane Idai struck Zimbabwe several years ago, Christian Aid, in collaboration with the ACT Alliance, was one of the first to have 'boots on the ground.' They helped people to safety, rescued personal property and livestock, and helped people re-build over 500 houses.

Sostina told us that she is passionate about empowering women, whether this is in relation to economics or to family life. Sostina helps women set up markets that empower them to get good prices for their produce. Sometimes, women need assistance to get out of abusive situations. Sostina is there to help with the assistance of the church. Please continue in your prayers for Zimbabwe, especially given how attention is being diverted by local and global crises.

Amanda's Eco-hint for May:

Please dispose of your rubbish securely. Rubbish that you put in your dustbin may end up on an open rubbish tip, where it can be harmful to animals and birds. Cut up elastic bands, plastic around drink cans and balloons. Tie plastic bags; cut plastic bottles in half if you're not recycling them; scrunch up lids from yoghurt pots—help prevent animals from being stuck inside. Pinch together—carefully—the tops of cans. Don't leave fishing line or hooks.

We thank God for all the creatures He has created. These simple hints can help to protect them.



Don't let someone fly-tip your rubbish—ask to see a licence.

Mark writes:

May Prayer Themes

As we continue in the season of Easter, our prayers this month will reflect on the hope, presence, and renewal offered through the risen Christ. Each week, we are invited to hold both joy and struggle in prayer, trusting that resurrection is at work in our lives and world.

Week 1: Hope that Sustains

Scripture: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

Focus: Pray for those who are weary or waiting; for hope that is not shallow but rooted in God’s enduring presence. Ask for the grace to see signs of life, even in difficult places.

Week 2: God’s Nearness in All Things

Scripture: “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18)

Focus: Pray for those carrying grief, pain, or uncertainty. Ask God to draw close to all who need comfort, and to help us be gentle companions to one another.

Week 3: Renewal of Strength and Spirit

Scripture: “But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.” (Isaiah 40:31a)

Focus: Pray for renewal—for energy, courage, and rest. Lift up all who feel stretched thin, asking that the Spirit would restore what feels worn down or lost.

Week 4: Life by the Spirit

Scripture: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25)

Focus: As Pentecost draws near, pray for guidance through the Spirit’s wisdom, creativity, and peace. Ask that we may be led into deeper love for God, and for one another.

