

# BROXBORNE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MAGAZINE

Minister: Revd. Mark Robinson 07510782031 revdmarkr@gmail.com

Treasurer: Amanda Harwood

Pastorate Administrator: Stepanka Moysey Mobile 07362592580 urcnlvg@gmail.com

Guest Editor: Dorothy Blatcher

Please submit items and news for the March Magazine to our returning Editor, Julia Davies. Julia asks 'As soon as anyone has an item ready could they please send it but by Feb 20th at the latest'. Welcome back Julia!

## **Letter from Mark**

Dear Friends,

February is here, and we stand at a threshold.

We speak the word *Trust* while our feet sense movement beneath us. Amalgamation gathers pace. Lent approaches with its call to truth, prayer, and turning. These moments belong together. They speak to the same journey.

Trust matters most when answers take time. Trust grows when the ground feels unsure and we choose to keep walking. Trust steadies us as we carry memory, hope, and responsibility into something new. This is the trust we name this year—trust placed in God, whose faithfulness holds across seasons of change.

Our work of amalgamation asks for care and courage. It invites us to honour what has shaped us and to pay attention to what is emerging. Churches are living communities, formed by people, prayer, service, and a love that acts, stays, and carries responsibility. This love listens when it would be easier to speak, remains present when things feel uncomfortable, and commits to one another for the sake of the whole.

When communities come together, God gathers more than buildings or plans. God gathers stories. God gathers hope and grief held side by side. God gathers gifts that had been waiting for one another.

Lent soon draws near. Lent sharpens our attention. It teaches us to let go of what distracts without letting go of what matters. It reminds us that faith deepens through honesty, shared discipline, and hope shaped by faithful love. Lent does not hurry us. It forms us. Trust grows well in that ground.

We trust God  
when the ground feels unsure.  
We trust God  
when answers take time.  
We trust God  
with what we carry,  
with who we are becoming,  
with the future unfolding before us.

This trust shapes how we speak and how we listen. It shapes how we stay with one another. It strengthens our commitment to justice, mercy, and shared life. It keeps us rooted even as we move.

As February unfolds, may we walk gently with one another. May there be space for questions and patience for the journey. May we notice where God's presence is already at work among us—steady, faithful, and sustaining.

We are church.  
We are held by God.  
We trust God.

With faith and hope,  
Mark

### **Trust and a Question Worth Asking**

Many of us grew up hearing that God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. It is familiar. It sounds settled. Yet when we look closely at the original Hebrew text, the word translated as *rib* actually means *side*. Everywhere else in the Bible where this word appears, it is translated as *side*.

So why *rib* here?

This question matters. Translation always involves choice, and choices often reflect the world in which they are made. Words shape how we imagine God and how we understand one another.

*Rib* suggests distance and hierarchy.  
*Side* suggests closeness, shared life, mutual presence.

Side by side.  
Face to face.

I studied biblical languages because I wanted to read Scripture carefully, trusting it enough to ask hard and honest questions. One of the discoveries that stayed with me is how much meaning can turn on a single word.

John Calvin once described Scripture as a pair of spectacles. Without them, our vision of God and the world remains blurred. With them, we begin to see more clearly. Yet even spectacles need careful adjustment.

The Bible remains trustworthy. God remains faithful. Our reading continues to grow as we learn to see with care, humility, and courage.

Perhaps faith sometimes begins with a simple question worth sharing over a cup of tea: Why was this word chosen . . . and what might God be inviting us to see, side by side?

Mark

# TRUST

---

Trust God  
when the ground feels unsure.

Trust God  
when answers take time.

Trust God  
with what we carry,  
with who we are becoming,  
with the future unfolding before us.

*“Those who trust in God  
are like Mount Zion:  
steadfast, unshaken, enduring.”*  
— Psalm 125:1

---

**2026**

We trust God.  
Our hope is in God.  
Our lives are because of God.  
We are church, gathered to praise God.

## **Remembering Mary Laurence**

On 21st January, Rosemary Woodall wrote:

Dear Friends,

It is with sadness that I have been asked to let you know that Mary Lawrence, a long-standing member of URC Broxbourne, passed away on Saturday morning at the care home in Wormley. Over the preceding week she had become unwell, spent several days in hospital, and was then discharged to the care home, where she died a day or so later. Although we have not seen Mary, or her husband Eric in church for many years - certainly since before Covid times - many of you will remember them, as well as sons Mark and Kevin, fondly.

Mary's funeral will take place on Friday 27th February at 12.00 noon at Woollensbrook Crematorium, with refreshments afterwards at the College Arms, Hertford Heath. All are welcome.

Please hold Mary's family close in prayer at this time.

Love and God bless,

Rosemary

Mary joined our church in November 1980 and was deeply involved in the life of our church. We remember her baking for the Christmas and May markets, especially her wonderful meringues and shortbread. Mary enjoyed helping with COMET and especially with teas at our mother and toddler group. She was our busy hall lettings secretary. Mary joined in church activities and clubs, including After Eights. We remember her with love.

From a conversation with Diane

### Services February 2026

1 Feb		Natasha Appiah
8 Feb		Kathleen Laing
15 Feb	Communion Baptism of Marion Smith	Mark Robinson
22 Feb		David Ronco

### JUNIOR CHURCH

In Junior Church we follow the programme set by the URC's excellent Faith Adventures for Children Together and Youth Resource.

In January our focus was on 'Families'. Our programme went as follows:

- With the Magi we focussed upon useful gifts and our responses to them.
- We learned how by God's Grace each and every one of us is a gift of God and his favourite, precious child.
- Developing upon this we considered how God's Grace makes us part of God's very own family
- and finally, we began to consider our place as part of the beautiful, multicultural, intergenerational family that is God's church.

It was when working with our children on the last of these areas that Brenda and Maggie came up with the exciting idea of creating a church scrapbook in which each member of our church family - young or old - could answer a few simple questions outlining very briefly how and when they came to faith and what being part of a church family means to them. Our church family has always valued our young people and their contributions to our worship - endeavouring to make them feel part of the family. They are on a journey. In common with each of us adults, they are all at different stages and this mini project will be both a record and celebration of the journey that we all travel together.

Please look out for a mini-questionnaire. We really hope that you will want to respond. It will mean a lot to our young people.

Rosemary

(on behalf of Maggie and Brenda)

## **Advance notice: 5 April – Easter Sunday Amalgamation Welcome Service at Broxbourne**

### **Church activities and meetings**

**COMET** Mondays 2-4pm Come along to ‘enjoy togetherness’, refreshments, chat and Rummikub.

**SHORT MAT BOWLS** 7.30 Every Thursday evening in the church hall. Please speak to Alan Earl if you would like to join.

**AFTER EIGHTS** A programme of interesting talks in our church hall on the first Tuesday of the month 2-4pm. On 3<sup>rd</sup> February the speaker is Tim Turner with Family Memories

**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 – Contact: Rosemary Woodall.

**PRAYER FELLOWSHIP** meeting by Zoom at 5.30pm on Friday 6th February

**ART DROP-IN** in the Lounge with Jill. Tuesday 24 February 2-3.30. Materials provided.

**CONVERSATIONAL BIBLE STUDY** Laurence says: we will be meeting every other Wednesday commencing 4th March until the 9th December. All welcome. We will be starting with the subject of “GLORY”.

### **Events in our hall**

**Tuesday 17 February Friends of Lowewood Museum 7.30 for 8pm ‘OFF THE RECORD,**  
Album Art – Rupert Dickens

**Tuesday 24 February 8pm SE Herts RSPB meeting on 27 January** Rachel Fancy,  
Conservation on Wallasea Island. All welcome. Contact: Dorothy Blatcher

### **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER Friday 6th March 2026**

What are Nigeria’s concerns and hopes for 2026?

We shall find out

‘I will give you rest, come’ Matthew 11 v28 – 30

Methodist Church, Middlefield Rd, Hoddesdon, EN11 9ED 11am followed by coffee & lunch

Also, Wormley Community Centre, Fairfield Drive EN10 6DX, 7:30pm followed by refreshments

Contact at Broxbourne URC: Natasha Appiah



### **Donations and fund raising**

Voluntary donations from the Hot lunch came to £35.22 after expenses. The money will go to the Foodbank.

Our Christmas services raised £335.70 for the Isabel Hospice.

Donations to the Children’s Society at our Christingle service raised £185. We have received a letter of thanks.

The total amount raised from the Christmas Market (after expenses and including donations) was £1,483.72, which is a record!

### **Our amazing Pastorate Lunch**

After our service on Epiphany, 11<sup>th</sup> January, we were joined by our fellow pastorate for an amazing lunch. On the menu Shepherd’s pie and vegetables, not just one recipe, but a variety from Broxbourne’s great chefs and if you were undecided, some crafty diners managed to taste several! There were a vegan and a gluten free pie option and for younger diners a few pizzas made their way to the table. All washed down with Adam’s ale. We were spoilt for choice with the desserts, which had carefully travelled from Hertford, including

apple crumbles, fruit salad, a magnificent strawberry pavlova, constructed on our premises and lemon meringue pie. From Cheshunt came a delicious seasonal chocolate log, apricot and cherry sponge and more. When we had had our fill, Mark gave a vote of thanks to those involved. We were saddened that Diane, who was instrumental in the initial planning, was too poorly to attend. We wished her well and a card was sent around for all to sign. I believe my husband signed for just himself, but my thanks were there in spirit too! Dorothy took up the challenge, stepped into the role and rallied the "troops" to make, bake, put up tables, set out the table places, cook/heat the meal, serve, wash up, clear and clean up. What a Superwoman and a great Team and what a wonderful Christian get together for our three Churches. Thank you to everyone. When is the next meal for the Pastorate I hear you ask? Maybe in the Summer, was someone's suggestion.

Mary Bite

**We focus this month on our FIRE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the following emergency procedure.**

**Important** - The door to the Church should be unlocked during the time that the upper room is in use as this allows keyless access to the fire door at the front of the Church. **ENSURE** however that it is locked before you leave.

#### **IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE**

**1. Sound the alarm** by using one of the small alarm activators situated just inside the main outside doors, by each of the two main hall fire exits or by the toilet entrance in the upper room.

**2. Evacuate the premises** by using the nearest and safest exit and **assemble all occupants** at the assembly point on the green across the road **away from the premises.**

**Do not use the lift. Do not collect personal belongings. Do not take risks.**

3. At the same time **Call the fire brigade** using any mobile by dialing '999' or '112'. Give the operator your telephone number and ask for 'Fire'. When the fire brigade replies tell the operator: **FIRE AT: UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, BROXBOURNE, MILL LANE, BROXBOURNE, EN10 7BQ.** Do not end the call until the address has been repeated by the fire brigade.

4. **Meet the fire brigade** on arrival and provide as much relevant information **as possible** to assist the brigade including:

The location and nature of the fire. Any persons trapped.

N.B. Upstairs wheel chair users can be carried down or held at top of stairs in one of the 2 refuge areas until fire brigade arrive.

5. Only use the **fire extinguishers** if it is safe to do so and you know how to use them.

6. No one should re-enter the building until authorised by the fire brigade.

#### **IF YOU HEAR THE ALARM**

On hearing the alarm, it is the duty of all responsible persons to investigate the reason for the alarm. If there is smoke or a smell of fire carry out actions 2, 3, & 4 above.

If it is found that there is no fire and it is a false alarm, there is no need to call the Fire Brigade unless you feel you would prefer to do so.

**Carry out the instructions** shown on the alarm box in the main entrance.

#### **EMERGENCY FIRE EXITS**

**From main hall:**

1. The main entrance
2. Fire escape door into the car park
3. Via side room to Mill Lane Close

**From side rooms or lounge:**

Via side room to Mill Lane Close or via lounge to main entrance

**From upstairs:**

1. Via upper room and stairs to the main entrance.
2. Or, if the main staircase isn't available, from the upper room through the Church Sanctuary, and from the Church Sanctuary through the left-hand doors on the dais and stairs down to the exit to Mill Lane Close.

**AMANDA'S FEBRUARY ECO HINTS**

We've had the January warm spell, but there is still a lot of cold weather to come in February and March. Don't be fooled by the daffodil shoots! So please keep feeding the birds and wildlife and putting out drinking/bathing water for the birds.

Bubble wrap can be used to line windows or greenhouse panes. Also, to wrap pots or tender plants, such as potted fruit trees, especially if in bud.

Empty blister packs (medicine) can be recycled at some Boots, but they can also be put in the small white caddy in the Upper Room, along with any used asthma inhalers. Used plastic bottles (e.g. orange juice bottles) - cut the bottoms off. The tops make great mini cloches to protect garden plants or potted plants from frost.

With bad weather, be prepared for power cuts. Make sure torch batteries are ok and have spares. Keep a flask of hot water to make a hot drink or fill a hot water bottle.

A second thin jumper will warm you up and save turning the heating up. If you have any tatty old knitted/crocheted jumpers/cardigans, they can be unpicked, and the wool worked up again to make clothes or squares for blankets. Contact Amanda.

**Pastorate Update 18** from Stepanka and Mark was emailed to the fellowship on 19th January. Copies have been given to those not on email.

**GOOD NEWS STOP PRESS**

Mary and Chris Bite are pleased to share the good news that Suzanne gave birth to Millie Abbie Flowers on 27th January at 33.5 weeks gestation 4lbs2ozs in Rosie Maternity Addenbrookes.

Millie's parents and grandparents are relieved and delighted. Millie is in the special care until she weighs 5lbs or reaches what would have been 36 weeks gestation.

Congratulations and welcome baby Millie!