



HERTFORD, Cowbridge, SG14 1PG



FEBRUARY 2026

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,

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

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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 imagined 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 Scriptures 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

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.

PASTORATE UPDATE

Proverbs 3 v 5-6:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding;

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Dear all,

Here we are, already well into the new year 2026. Time never seems to stand still, but how wonderful that we can put our time (past, present and future) in God’s hands and trust Him to lead us.

From Stepanka

Broxbourne Elders Meeting was held on 14 January where important church matters were discussed. Please remember to encourage and pray for your Elders. I will be attending the **Synod Resources Day** on Saturday 31 January to find out about important updates with a special focus on what the URC’s Church Life Review might mean for the churches.

I am currently working through the **Annual Church Returns** for Broxbourne and Cheshunt and the **Annual Safeguarding Reports** for the pastorate. The safeguarding compliance levels have significantly improved since the last year’s report, but there are still mandatory Intermediate and Advanced training sessions that will need to be completed by the church volunteers this year.

Please note that Belinda Herbert, the **Synod Safeguarding Officer**, is now back from her maternity leave. Her **new contact number** is: 0747 153 1977. This is important to note should you wish to contact her directly in case of a safeguarding concern. The safeguarding posters displayed around the churches will be updated to reflect Belinda’s new details.

You are all invited to a special **Joint service with Catriona Wheeler** (Moderator of the General Assembly) on 22 February at Trinity Church in Enfield EN2 6AN. The service will start at 10:30 am and will be followed by tea/coffee and cake. Please save the date and let your Elders know if you are thinking of attending. More details about the church service will follow when we have the details from Catriona herself.

From Mark

January has been a month where we have started looking at trust, recommitment, and shared purpose across our pastorate, as we continue to walk together through an important season in our common life.

At the centre of this month has been the ongoing work of **amalgamation**. This journey has now moved into a practical phase. Much prayerful discernment has already taken place, and we are now turning our attention to how we carry this work forward well. I am in the process of forming an Amalgamation Delivery Team, a small group who will help share responsibility for the work ahead. This will include coordination, communication, planning for key services, practical arrangements, and careful attention to how Cheshunt Free Church and URC Broxbourne become one church together. This work will be steady, thoughtful, and rooted in trust.

At **Broxbourne**, we gathered for a meaningful Rededication and Covenant Service. As a congregation, we recommitted ourselves to following God and to the covenant first made at baptism and renewed through membership. It was a time of shared resolve and deep faith, affirming that God continues to call the church to live the coming year grounded in trust, justice, mercy, and courage. The service spoke of a God who makes divine life known through shared human experience, who names people beloved, and who calls the church to live faithfully in the world.

After the service, we shared a joyful pastorate lunch. Broxbourne provided the main course, with Hertford and Cheshunt bringing the sweet. The hall was filled with conversation, laughter, and genuine togetherness. My thanks go to everyone who prepared food, set up the hall, served, and helped create such a warm and welcoming time. These shared moments strengthen us and remind us who we are together.

At **Hertford**, we marked the launch of the Trust theme on the first Sunday of the new year. The Communion service explored trust as something lived and practised in response to God's faithful presence in a complex world. Trust was named as something shaped through worship, formed by justice and mercy, and lived out through courage, generosity, and shared life. Around the table, we were reminded that trust grows as we receive grace and offer it to one another.

At **Cheshunt**, worship continued to speak clearly into this season of change and hope. The service called the congregation to recognise Jesus clearly, trust God deeply, and live as a people shaped by Christ's self-giving presence in the world. This clarity continues to sustain the congregation as we move forward together.

Across the pastorate, these gatherings reflect a church attentive to God's call, grounded in community, and willing to step forward together. Thank you for your faithfulness, generosity, and steady commitment to this shared journey.

Prayer

Faithful God,
You are our dwelling place in every season.
You call your people to walk together,
to listen with care,
and to place their trust in your presence.

As scripture reminds us,
“Trust in God with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge God,
and God will make your paths straight.”
(Proverbs 3:5–6)

Guide our life as a pastorate.
Let our planning be shaped by wisdom.
Let our worship form us for justice and mercy.
Let our shared life reflect your generous love.

Hold us steady as we move forward together,
rooted in trust,
open to hope,
and attentive to the future you are bringing into being ~ Amen.

PRAYERS

Continue to pray for Bob, Fran and their family.
Continue to pray for Jan Carter
Continue to pray for Phoebe who is still seriously ill.
Continue to pray for Shirley’s grandson, Michael.
Continue to pray for Janet and Trevor Williams’ daughter, Jo, as she continues her
fight against cancer.
Pray for Kim as she recovers from surgery.
Pray for people known to you that they may know God’s love and strength.

Michael, Shirley's grandson, is back teaching at the school in Madagascar after the Christmas break. This will be the first full term at the school since the Political uprising in Madagascar last year. The younger children seem to be settling in but the older ones are still unsettled.

Please pray for the young people as they settle back into school, because education is the way to a better life in such a poor country.

DROP IN ART GROUP

Drop in Art Group – Tuesday 24th February 2026
2.00 – 3.30 pm
Broxbourne URC Lounge

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.

SNOWDROPS

Laurence Alma-Tadema, 1865 - 1940

Little Ladies, white and green,
With your spears about you,
Will you tell us where you've been,
Since we lived without you?

You are sweet and fresh and clean,
With your pearly faces;
In the dark earth where you've been.
There are wondrous places.

Yet you come again, serene,
When the leaves are hidden;
Bringing joy from where you've been,
You return, unbidden.

Little ladies, white and green,
Are you glad to cheer us?
Hunger not for where you've been,
Stay till Spring be near us!

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DIARY JANUARY 2026

1 Feb	10.30	Morning Service Led by our Minister, Revd Mark Robinson, including the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
2 Feb	10.15-12.15	Short Mat Bowls
4 Feb	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches
5 Feb	10.00 am 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Morning Short Mat Bowls
8 Feb	10.30 12.30	Morning Service – Led by John Ellis
9 Feb	10.15-12.15	Short Mat Bowls
11 Feb	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches
12 Feb	10.00 am 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Morning, followed by Hot Potato Lunch. Short Mat Bowls
15 Feb	10.30	Morning Service – Led by Carolina Davey
16 Feb	10.15-12.15	Short Mat Bowls
18 Feb	8.00	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt Churches
19 Feb	10.00 am 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Meeting , Short Mat Bowls
22 Feb	10.30	Morning Service – Led by Martin Birds, All Saints Church
23 Feb	10.15-12.15	Short Mat Bowls
25 Feb	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne and Cheshunt churches
26 Feb	10.00 am 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Meeting Short Mat Bowls
1 Mar	10.30	Morning Service Led by our Minister, Revd Mark Robinson, including the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

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

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