



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

Treasurer: Amanda Harwood E-mail : harwoodamanda2@gmail.com

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

April 2026

Whenever there is a story about scams you always think you could never fall for that yourself. The trouble is we all could. It's so easy not to be on your guard, or just to be curious or careless. It seems that your editor fell for simply ticking a box without any intention to 'join' an organisation which apparently can give you discounts on many products and services. There is a hidden monthly cost for this which I didn't immediately notice! Fortunately it seems they will refund the payments. However it really makes you reflect—robbery is far more likely to occur over the internet today than in your home. I have had dozens of fake texts addressing me as Mum, and continuing 'I have a new mobile number'. I get messages apparently from Royal Mail or EE that clearly come from made up email addresses. Watch out!

Happy Easter!



Dear Friends,

When I think of Easter I think of radiance that cannot be contained. I think of new life bursting forth and engulfing the entire world. The resurrection of Christ is God's declaration that life is stronger than death, love deeper than hatred, and hope more enduring than despair. It is the announcement of a new creation already breaking into the old.

Yet we receive this good news in a world marked by war, displacement, ecological crisis, and deep uncertainty. The earth itself groans. Communities fracture. Many carry private griefs that the wider world never sees. Easter does not ask us to ignore these realities. It proclaims that God meets us within them and calls forth life even here.

In recent weeks, our own pastorate has lived this pattern of ending and beginning. We gathered to give thanks for the long and faithful witness of Cheshunt Free Church, a place of prayer, service, memory, and belonging for generations. That thanksgiving was tender and yet carried weight. It was filled with gratitude for all that has been. At the same time, we now move forward as an enlarged community, as two congregations become one and three congregations become two. We yet reach out to thank God for new beginnings. Where there has been loss, there is also promise. Where doors have closed, others open.

This is Easter work. Seeds fall into the ground and disappear from sight before they rise in new form. The risen Christ still bears the marks of suffering, yet those wounds become signs of life rather than defeat. Resurrection does not

erase the past; it transforms it.

Our calling now is to live as people of the resurrection, people who plant hope, nurture community, and care for the earth entrusted to us. In a time of climate emergency, Easter reminds us that creation itself belongs to God and that renewal is woven into the very fabric of the world. In a time of conflict, Easter calls us to be makers of peace and guardians of human dignity. In a time of uncertainty, Easter steadies us with the assurance that the future is held in God's love.

By the time you read this we may already have joined one another for our Welcome Service at Easter, when we formally celebrate Cheshunt's and Broxbourne's new shared life together. We do so as companions on a journey shaped by grace, and not as strangers brought together by circumstance. We carry forward the gifts, stories, and faith of all who have gone before us, trusting that God is already at work among us in ways we cannot yet fully see.

May this Easter fill you with courage for the days ahead, tenderness for one another, and joy that springs from the deep well of God's life. May you glimpse signs of resurrection in ordinary places, in kindness given and received, in communities strengthened, in the stubborn persistence of hope.

Christ is risen. Life is stronger. Love endures.

With every blessing for this holy season,

Mark

Please remember to visit the Commitment for Life web-page to see who we can be supporting and praying for—at the moment people in Zimbabwe.

Remember to drink Fair Trade tea! - AND HAAVE YOU TRIED THEIR CHOCOLATE!

STOP PRESS

ART DROP-IN 28th in the Broxbourne Lounge with Jill. Materials provided. CONVERSATIONAL BIBLE STUDY Laurence says: we will be meeting every other Wednesday April 1st until the

9th December. All welcome. We will be starting with the subject of "GLORY".



*Rosemary writes:*

On Sunday 1st March we had a bumper attendance of 9 children in Junior Church. We were learning about the feast of the unleavened bread and gave it a modern twist by making a large number of pizzas that were enjoyed by members of the congregation during the time of fellowship after the service.

We were very proud of the way the youngsters worked so well as a team to create the pizzas. During the time I took a few photographs. The best one is above.

*David Davies has forwarded these messages from Churches Together:*

Dear All Just to let you know that Broxbourne Council have announced that the Delta Hotel will close down as a place for asylum seekers, by the end of June.

Thank you to everyone who has donated clothes, toys and stationery for the residents. They have been much appreciated. As no new residents are arriving, and the numbers in the hotel are reducing quite rapidly, we will not need any more donations for the hotel.

Diana Pastoral Enabler

### **Broxbourne Foodbank - Helpers Needed!**

We're looking for volunteers to help Broxbourne Foodbank in its important work supporting those in need in two particular roles. Can you help?

1) Preparing Food Parcels - we're looking for two new volunteers on Mondays and two on Thursdays to help prepare parcels at the warehouse (near Tesco, Brookfield Centre, Cheshunt). You would be needed from mid-morning to mid-afternoon on a weekly basis.

2) Drivers - we're looking for two new drivers, one to collect the foodbank van on Wednesdays to take food to St. Joseph's (Waltham Cross) for the distribution there and return it and the crates back to the warehouse afterwards (Wednesdays, ~12.30-3pm), and the other to do likewise for the distribution from St. Catherine and St. Paul's, Hoddesdon (Thursdays, ~9-11am).

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## Worship this month

5th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Easter Sunday Revd Mark Robinson All ages: Welcome Service following the amalgamation of Broxbourne URC and Cheshunt Free Church.  Refreshments after the service <b>NB Please bring a flower or two to decorate the cross -this will be taken into the church for the service and later placed in the downstairs window.</b>
12th 10.30 am	Brox URC	John Ellis
19th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Ruth Dewis
26th 10.30 am	Brox URC	Kathleen Laing

### 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 and continuing during the summer. **NB this will NOT be happening on Monday April 6th.**

**SHORT MAT BOWLS** Every Thursday evening in the church hall. 7.30pm 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—April 1st, 15th, 29th. Topic: Glory Speak to Laurence Sinden. Tea/coffee and biscuits.



### **Amanda's Eco hint for April:**

Is it just me, or does Spring seem a long time coming this year?

The local trees which are usually in blossom by now are still bare. But trees will not come into flower if their roots are cold.

So, that means there is still time to plant bare-root trees or bushes to provide berries or nuts for autumn wildlife in the future.

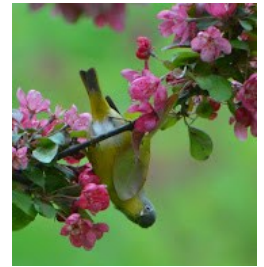
Test the soil temperature before sowing seeds or putting in potted/growing plants. If it feels cold to you, it will to the seeds.

The TV weather people are still warning of possible frosts, so keep the night time frost protection handy. Or put it down to warm the soil.

The big fruit juice bottles, if you cut the bottom off, make very good mini-cloches. They just fit the plastic flowerpots (so my sister tells me 😊) The cut-off bottom of the bottle can catch water from the flower-pot.

Freezers run more efficiently if they are full. So, while there is still plenty of rain, suggest you could freeze some rainwater and keep it in the freezer for dry spells to save acid-loving plants which need rainwater to survive.

**Message from the Synod Eco Team: many of the flowers in supermarkets are grown abroad, costly. The Eco Team ask us to be aware, and to gift locally grown blooms, preferably from your own w, if you have one. (But leave some for the local insects!) under special conditions, heating and lighting, before being flown in for sale in the UK. This is environmentally**



### **DECORATING EASTER EGGS**



Today many eggs are decorated with symbols like Easter bunnies that have very little reminders of the resurrection, what Easter is all about. To bring back the eggs to the original symbolism decorate the eggs with liturgical symbols or spiritual themes. This can be used as an artistic challenge for all those budding artists in the family. There are numerous ways to decorate eggs, but one easy way is to take Crayons (this on a plain boiled egg. Colour the egg with different designs and symbols, and then the eggs are dyed in food coloring, available at any food store. Using Crayon colors like white, yellow and other light colors to create designs on the eggs result in an interesting contrast against the darker colors of the dyes. Some suggested symbols:

butterfly, peacock, bursting pomegranate, the phoenix, the sparrow, the bee, the egg, Jonah and the fish;

**Easter scenes:** an empty tomb, an empty cross with a white cloth hanging, lamb with banner, Christ in white garments, angels at the tomb;

**Other religious symbols:** crosses, doves, lambs, triangle (for the Trinity), grapes, chalice, fish, Chi-Rho, Alpha and Omega;

**Joyful phrases:** "Alleluia, He is Risen!" "Christ is Risen, Alleluia!", "Christus Resurrexit Alleluia!" "The Lord is Risen!", "This is the day the Lord has made, alleluia!"; "Christ has become our paschal sacrifice."

**Symbols of the Resurrection:** Easter lily,

### **IN OUR CHURCH HALL— APRIL**

- |      |              |  |
|------|--------------|--|
| 7th  | 2.00pm       | After Eights RNLI by Paul Gillions   |
| 18th | 7.30pm       | Hoddesdon Music Club Ewan Miller—Oboe— and Tomos Boyles —Piano.  |
| 21st | 7.30 pm      | for coffee before 7.50 start, Lowood Society Ten Tudor Queens Part 3 FOLLY & WIS<br>DOM (C Howard and C Parr) Nicholas Henderson |
| 31st | 7.45 for 8PM | SE Herts RSPB AGM Lundy Island Paul Ballantyne.  |



*Thanksgiving Service for Cheshunt Free Church*

Above are the Moderator, Revd George Watt, The Mayor of Broxbourne, Councillor Patsy Spears and Revd Mark Robinson.

The Thanksgiving Service was both positive and rather sad. The Litany of the Journey reminded us of the past worshippers but also carried us forward on a continuing journey.

Thus we welcome members and friends of Cheshunt Free Church to Broxbourne! In particular we hope to see you **on Easter Sunday as we celebrate being together in our Welcome Service**

**The Prayer of St. Hippolytus of Rome** rejoicing

“Christ is Risen: The world below lies desolate

Christ is Risen: The spirits of evil are fallen

Christ is Risen: The angels of God are

Christ is Risen: The tombs of the dead are empty

Christ is Risen indeed from the dead,

the first of the sleepers,

Glory and power are his forever and ever”

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

## Deuteronomy 31:8:

*“The Lord goes before you and will be with you;  
God will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Dear all,

Welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> issue of the Pastorate Update! Across the pastorate, this month has reminded us that endings and beginnings often sit side by side. We give thanks for the faithfulness of the past, even as we step forward together into the future God is shaping among us.

### From Stepanka

A couple of **Elders meetings** took place over the last month – Broxbourne Elders meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February and Hertford Elders meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March. These meetings are important for the life of each church and show the complexity of different tasks that running a church represents. Please continue to pray for the work of your Elders.

My **other tasks** focused on communication – updating the NLVG pastorate website, creating posters for special events, reviewing the pastorate email distribution lists, organising important pieces of information, and keeping relevant people up to date.

I had **my Personal Development Review** with my manager, Dorothy Blather, last week. The meeting went well and provided a good opportunity to reflect on how my time can be better allocated to provide support where it is needed the most. I was also very grateful for all the constructive feedback I received from people that I work closely with.

I shared with you last June the announcement regarding **All Nations Christian College** – that it was preparing to leave Easneye by autumn 2026 in order to operate differently to fulfil their mission. These preparations are very much underway, and I am hoping to share the news about the new location with you in the next issue. Potential buyers' viewings are currently taking place. Please pray for the new owner to be a God loving organisation.

### From Mark

At the centre of this month was the **Thanksgiving Service at Cheshunt Free Church** on Sunday 22 March. Many who attended spoke afterwards of how moving and lovely the service had been. People gathered from across our congregations and beyond, including the Mayor of Broxbourne, the Synod Moderator who presided, the Synod Clerk, a number of lay preachers who have led worship over the years, former ministers, friends from Broxbourne and Hertford, and churches from across the area. It was a touching occasion in which we gave thanks for the long and faithful life of Cheshunt Free Church.

During the service, the Moderator reminded us that we are pilgrims on a journey and that God travels with us. Meaningful reflections were offered by three members of the congregation — Colin, Emma, and Josh — representing an elder, a child, and a young adult, and reflecting the breadth of the church community across generations. Prayers of thanksgiving were led by Jill Nugent. The readers included Dr David Davies, and the Gospel was read by Martin Legg. We were also blessed by Debbie's wonderful piano playing, which supported the worship wonderfully throughout the service.

A powerful symbolic act took place as the Bible and communion vessels were placed on the communion table by Nathan and Colin, expressing our continuing journey of faith and the assurance that God goes with us into the future. The service was followed by a warm reception in the hall, where conversation, memories, and mutual encouragement were shared.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed to this memorable day: those who decorated the church and prepared the displays, those who prepared and served refreshments, those who cleared up afterwards, and all who gave generously of their time and energy. Particular appreciation goes to the Amalgamation Delivery Team, whose work has been and continues to be essential, to the Worship Team for their careful help in preparation, to Maggie for her floral arrangements, and to Diane, Eunice, and the refreshments team for their hospitality.

and celebrates Easter. John Ellis will lead us in this event, helping to give the children an engaging and interactive glimpse into the life and faith of Hertford URC at this important time of year.

*Continued on page 7*

*Pastorate News continued*

At **Hertford**, we were pleased to respond to a request from Hertford St Andrew Primary School, who asked to visit the church on Thursday 26 March for an interactive Easter event. The school would normally visit the local Church of England parish, but unforeseen circumstances meant they were unable to do so this year. This provided a valuable opportunity for the children to visit a different Christian tradition and learn how the United Reformed Church understands and celebrates Easter. John Ellis will lead us in this event, helping to give the children an engaging and interactive glimpse into the life and faith of Hertford URC at this important time of year.

At **Broxbourne**, preparations are well underway for two major services. We look forward to welcoming Marion Smith into membership, and we are also preparing for the Easter Morning Welcome Service of Amalgamation, when the churches will formally become one new church. Following this service, further aspects of the amalgamation process will continue as we move into the work of finalising arrangements for our shared future.

**Prayer**

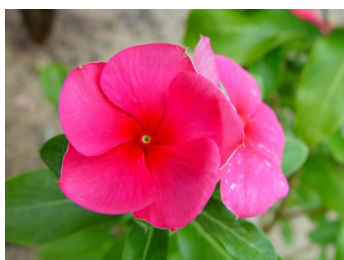
Faithful God,  
You walk with your people through every season —  
in remembrance, in transition, and in new beginnings.  
As scripture says,  
“The Lord goes before you and will be with you;  
God will never leave you nor forsake you.”  
(Deuteronomy 31:8)

**GRAPEVINE**

We welcome our newly amalgamated members to the Broxbourne URC Family. We hope to see much of you. Please join in our regular gatherings and if you'd like to be added to any rota speak to Teresa about reading, Mary Bite about Welcoming and Julia or Liz about coffee.

We wish Stepanka and her family a healthy Easter following a difficult time recently and that the staff and students of All Nations are Happy with the latest developments.

**Happy Easter to All!**



Rosemary writes:

I am sure you are aware our annual church **May Market on Bank Holiday Monday, 4th May** is fast approaching. This is one of the main fund-raising activities for our church. As well as its financial relevance it is also – and just as importantly – a social success and a witness to our community.

There are many ways in which you can help:

- Making cakes, preserves or puddings for the cake stall (Please speak to Diane)
- Helping on a stall for all or any of the period from 1.30 - 4.30pm
- Having your own stall (Please contact Mary)
- Setting up or putting away

Inviting anyone and everyone that you can think of whether face to face, by phone or via the internet.

Thank you to those of you who have already spoken to Mary or myself offering help – many thanks.

For any further offers please contact me on 07740 460118 or [rosemary.woodall@ntlworld.com](mailto:rosemary.woodall@ntlworld.com) or Mary on 07707 180296 or [halletsec@hotmail.com](mailto:halletsec@hotmail.com).

There are two things of which I am certain...

- As a church family we are exceptionally good at rising to a challenge and working as a team.
- The sum of whatever everyone does together is far greater than the sum of each part.

This is always an enjoyable - although often exhausting - event. Together we can and will make this a success again this year.

Whatever you can offer to do will be hugely valued and greatly appreciated.

Thank you again,

Rosemary

(on behalf of Bite, Bite, Woodall & Woodall – Management Committee!)



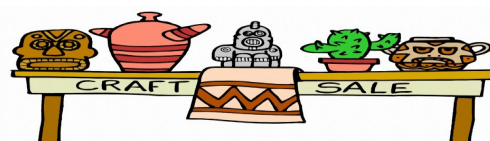
## May CRAFT & PLANT Market



**Lots of help needed!**

Setting up beforehand. Selling from 1.30pm to 4.30pm and clearing up afterwards.

**We need YOU! PLEASE can you help?**



**Mark writes:**

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

During Lent we often speak about repentance.

Many of us were taught to think of repentance as feeling sorry — a moment of regret, an apology offered to God.

Yet in the New Testament, the word translated as repent means something deeper. It speaks of a change of mind, a turning of direction, a reordering of life.

Repentance is not simply sorrow.

It is reorientation.

John Calvin described the Christian life as continual repentance — not because believers live in constant failure, but because grace continually reshapes us. As God's mercy meets us, our loves are re-ordered. What once governed us loosens its grip. Christ becomes the centre.

This matters.

If repentance is only about guilt, Lent can feel heavy and inward.

If repentance is about reorientation, Lent becomes spacious and hopeful.

It invites questions such as:

What is shaping our instincts?

What governs our decisions?

What story directs our common life?

For a church walking toward newness of life together, this question carries weight.

So here is something worth asking over tea:

When you hear the word repentance, do you think of regret - or of reorientation?

And if God is turning us again toward Christ, what might need to shift in us - personally and together?

EDITOR Julia Davies [juliadavies890@btinternet.com](mailto:juliadavies890@btinternet.com)