



HERTFORD, Cowbridge, SG14 1PG



APRIL 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,

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 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 Fre 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 communities 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 circumstances. 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 fully yet 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.

PASTORATE UPDATE

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 20th 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 25th February and Hertford Elders meeting on 12th 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.

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)

Hold us as we give thanks for the past
and prepare for what lies ahead.
Bless our churches with courage, unity, and hope.
Guide our steps as we become one people together,
rooted in your love
and open to your future ~ 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, and her Great Grandson, Vinney,
currently awaiting an operation. .
Continue to pray for Janet and Trevor Williams’ daughter, Jo, as she continues her
fight against cancer.
Pray for Cheryl and her family as they mourn the loss of Philip.
Pray for Jant Dummett as she recovers from hip surgery.
Pray for Margaret as she recovers from knee surgery.
Pray for people known to you that they may know God’s love and strength.

PHILIP JACKSON

We were all so sad to hear of the death of Philip Jackson recently. Most of us knew Philip as the stoic rock behind Cheryl. We would often hear Cheryl say, “oh I don’t know what I would do without him.” Cooking, cleaning, helping with many practical things as far as his limited vision would allow, giving advice and just generally being there for her, their family and the Bramfield Community. Without Philip, Cheryl could never have achieved all she has done over so many years in helping other in so many ways. They were a great team. This kind, gentle and wise man will be sadly missed by so many and we pray for comfort and peace for Cheryl and her family in the coming months.

DROP IN ART GROUP

Drop in Art Group – Tuesday 21st April, 2026
2.00 – 3.30 pm
Broxbourne URC Lounge

Easter School Visits

This Easter we have reached around 200 children with the Easter story. I took a whole school assembly at Millmead School. In addition, we were delighted to welcome for the first time two classes from St Andrews School to hear the Easter story and to find out a little about our Church.

The feedback I received from St Andrews is that the children were still talking about the visit in the afternoon and would like to visit again in the future. I have also been told that one of the children at Millmead went home and told her mum about the visit and how they heard the Easter story and learnt a song. What we don't know is how many children went home and told their parents about Easter. Indeed it may be helpful for then sometime in the future.

John Ellis

THANK YOU from Cheryl

I wish to thank all of you, my wonderful Church family, for your prayers and support over the last month which has been a very difficult time for me and my family. Phillip's funeral will be at St Andrews Church, Bramfield at 3.00 pm on Friday 17th April. All are welcome

HERTFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER

There are free Grief and Loss Counselling sessions starting in the St Andrew's Centre (behind the church) tomorrow. These have been set up to help those in our congregation and community who could benefit from them.

Katie and Stuart, who are running the course, are keen for more people to know about it and so I'm sharing this with you to circulate within Churches Together, if that's okay.

People can start the course on Thursday 19th if tomorrow is too soon, that's fine.

There are more details on our website: www.hertfordstandrews.co.uk/griefandloss

FUTURE HOPE - ONE LAST PUSH

Thank you all so much, if you have been putting little blue tokens into our slot at the Hertford and Ware Tesco stores. We would like one more push until the end of April to both Hertford and Ware stores, so if you are shopping in either store, please remember to pick up some blue tokens and vote for us so that we can get the maximum amount of community funding to help young people in Hertford and Ware.

Thank you.

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.

DIARY ADDITONS

Wednesday 22nd April – Civic Society use Church – 7.15 pm

Saturday 25th April – Art Society Handing in Day – Church Hall

Tuesday 28th April – Water meter installation at Church

Tuesday 28th April evening – Joint Elders meeting Broxbourne

Friday 1st May – 10th. Art Society Exhibition in Church Halls

STIR OUR VOICES: LET US BE HEARD.

Lord we live in an unjust world.
We hear of people in poverty,
stripped of their rights by corruption and greed.
Help us to speak words of justice.
Let our voices be heard.
Loving God use us.
Show us how to work with you.

We remember those places where they are
suffering from the aftermath of natural disasters,
the effects of climate change blighting lives.
Let us speak loudly to those who can make a change.
Loving God use us.
Show us how to work with you.

We bring to you those who live in sadness,
people who need to see that there
is sunshine after rain.
Let us speak gently to those who see no light
and comfort those with an uncertain future
Loving God use us.
Show us how to work with you.

Let your spirit stir our voices and
help us to be heard where we can make a difference

DIARY APRIL 2026

1 Apr	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
2 Apr	10.00 am 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Morning Short Mat Bowls
5 Apr	10.30	Morning Service – Led by our Minister, Mark Robinson, including the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
6 Apr	10.15- 12.15	Short Mat Bowls
8 Apr	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
9 Apr	10.- 00 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Morning followed by Hot Potato Lunch Short Mat Bowls
12 Apr	10.30	Morning Service – Led by John Ellis
13 Apr	10.15- 12.15 pm	Short Mat Bowls
15 Apr	10.30	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
16 Apr	10.00 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Morning Short Mat Bowls
19 Apr	10..30	Morning Service – Led by Chris Hall
20 Apr	10.15- 12.15	Short Mat Bowls
22 Apr	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
23 Apr	10.00 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Morning Short Mat Bowls
26 Apr	10.30	Morning Service –
27 Apr	10.15- 12.15	Short Mat Bowls
29 Apr	8.00 pm	On-line prayer meeting with Broxbourne Church
30 Apr	10.00 2-4 pm	Open House Coffee Morning Short Mat Bowls

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

Enquiries 07851 70847

07510782031 revdmarkr@gmail.com
Church Administrator: Stepanka Moysey urcnlvg@gmail.com
MINISTER: REVD. MARK ROBINSON , 6 Tudor Rise, Broxbourne, EN10 7HB
Editor: Fran Spence 01992 586585 franjspence@gmail.com Website: www.hertford.unc.org.uk