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**May
2026**

Who recognises these words? '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?' Mark signed off a piece about Lent in last month's magazine with those words. I wonder how the chat over tea really went? Maybe it was about reorientating yourself as you looked at your diary and found a way to help out with a request from somebody. Each Sunday we are reminded that we can have 'further fellowship' over tea and coffee. Is that a slightly old-fashioned word now and associated with academics? Would camaraderie work as well or better? Biscuits and sometimes cakes have featured regularly for the last few years and Liz has kindly introduced gf biscuits—that's a lovely reorientation.

Dear Friends,

We are still in the season of Easter.

Easter is more than one Sunday. It is the season in which the Church continues to live with the news that Christ is risen. The joy of Easter does not finish when the hymns of Easter Day have been sung. It continues through the life of the Church as we pray, worship, serve, and seek to follow Christ in the world.

This month also brings us to the Ascension of Christ.

What do you think of when you hear that Jesus ascended to heaven? What images come to your mind?

Some people think that the Ascension is a fanciful tale of fantasy. Perhaps that is because of the images the Ascension conjures in their minds. Many of those images have come to us through paintings, icons, stained glass windows, and children's Bible pictures.

If you do a quick search for Jesus' Ascension, you will see many artists' interpretations of the event. Very often Jesus is shown floating above the disciples. He has been lifted from the ground and is pictured rising bodily into heaven. There are sometimes clouds, angels, trumpets, and doves around him as he ascends.

Perhaps these are the images that influence how many of us picture the Ascension.

The Bible accounts are much simpler.

The Gospel of Mark says:

"After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God."

Mark 16:19

Luke records it this way:

"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven."

Luke 24:50-51

Acts gives us a little more detail:

"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

Acts 1:9

These accounts give us eye witness testimony. They tell us that those who saw the Ascension experienced something beyond ordinary explanation. They speak of Jesus being taken up, of a cloud hiding him from their sight, and of the risen Christ returning to the life and presence of God.

The one who came from God, who lived among us, cared for us, loved us, suffered with us, died for us, and was raised, is taken into the fullness of God's glory.

This is the risen Christ carrying human life, human suffering, human wounds, and human hope into the presence of God.

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ART DROP-IN 19th in the Broxbourne Lounge with Jill. Materials provided.



Worship this month

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|--|
| May 3rd 10.30 am | Brox URC | John Danso |
| 10th 10.30 am | Brox URC | Sandra Rose |
| 17th 10.30 am | Brox URC | Revd Mark Robinson |
| 24th 10.30 am | Brox URC | Revd Mark Robinson All welcome! Pentecost, Communion, Gift Day Bring and Share Lunch. Gift Day envelopes will be available. |
| 31st | Brox URC | John Danso |

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 May 4th - we hope to see you at the Craft and Plant Market.**

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 alternate Wednesdays—13th and 27th . Topic: Glory Speak to Laurence Sinden. Tea/coffee and biscuits.

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And what is more. Jesus promised that his leaving meant the Spirit would come. His earthly ministry was for a time and place. Through the Spirit, the presence of Christ is with us always. The Church is called to live as a Spirit-filled people, bearing witness to the love of God in worship, service, mercy, justice, and hope.

The Ascension therefore belongs with Easter. The empty tomb, the risen Christ, the blessing at Bethany, the cloud that hides him from sight, and the promise of the Spirit all belong together. They tell us that Christ is risen, Christ reigns with God, Christ blesses the Church, and Christ sends us to live as witnesses.

So, as we continue through this Easter season and come again to Ascension, may we lift our eyes in faith, open our hearts in prayer, and offer our lives again to the work of Christ.

The risen Christ blesses us still.

With every blessing,
 Mark

From the URC Website:

Leaders from across the UK's faith spectrum have come together to urge MPs to remove a clause from the Crime and Policing Bill that could shut down lawful, conscience-led protest.

The joint letter, coordinated by Quakers in Britain and signed by Catriona Wheeler, Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly, Bishop Mike Royal, Rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber, Lord Indarjit Singh and 15 other faith and belief leaders, warns that the Bill's new "cumulative disruption" clause is too vague and too broad.

The clause requires police to consider previous and planned protests in the same area when deciding whether to impose conditions on a demonstration.

"It could mean that we are stopped from demonstrating because another protest previously took place in the same area, even if it was on a completely different issue," signatories wrote.

The letter comes as the [Bill returns to the House of Commons](#) on 14 April following its Lords third reading on 25 March.

The Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist leaders say that despite their differences, they share a common commitment to love and justice.

Members of all their communities are led by conscience to protest peacefully on issues that matter to them, they said.

And they point out that peaceful protest has often involved cumulative action. Campaigns that changed the world from the suffragettes to communities standing up against fracking were built on repeated, sustained demonstration.

Their concern is shared widely. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has called the clause too broadly drafted.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly [recently told](#) UK civil society organisations and MPs that she was seriously concerned about these repressive new laws and the clause on cumulative disruption in particular

This Bill is the third piece of anti-protest legislation in recent years.

"Peaceful protest motivated by faith, belief and love should be celebrated, not criminalised. We urge the government and MPs to drop the clause on cumulative disruption," the letter says.

UPDATE—THESE CONCERNS HAVE NOT YET BEEN ADDRESSED

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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Easter Sunday Amalgamation Service

Rosemary writes:

Easter Sunday was a time of special celebration for our church. Not only were we celebrating with gusto that Christ is risen, for He is risen indeed, but we welcomed our brothers and sisters from Cheshunt Church as they all became one church, one fellowship and one family with Broxbourne at the start of a hope-filled time of new life together.

The service, led by our minister, Mark, was lively, thought-provoking, inclusive and encouraging with many special moments. 50-60 worshippers listened intently, contributed actively and sang enthusiastically. It was truly inter-generational with our young people playing an active role - they processed thoughtfully down the centre of the church to the worship table carrying the elements for Holy Communion. Special video messages of blessings and good wishes were received from both the Moderator, George Watt and Martin Legg, the Convenor of our Local Area Group.

All members of the congregation were encouraged to add flowers to a cross made from the trunk of a previous Christmas tree to jointly create a thing of beauty and hope, appropriate for Easter. It formed the centrepiece of our worship and after the service was taken downstairs and placed in a front window facing onto the road to form a witness for passersby.

The young people excitedly told the congregation of their plans to form a new youth group to meet on Friday afternoons after school. Another Easter sign of encouragement and growth. After Communion, the congregation stood together for a celebration photograph – see above - before going to the hall to enjoy sharing a delicious simnel cake specially baked for the occasion. Many thanks to all who played a part in making this such a memorable occasion.

Together we are an Easter People.



Christian Aid 10-16th May Week Donation envelopes will be distributed the week before. We no9 longer collect house to house in our area. Kathleen Lord has set up an e-envelope which can be found at [Hoddesdon Christian Aid Group—Christian Aid Week](#). She will also be hosting a simple lunch of soup, bread and cheese on Sunday 17th May in Broxbourne Parish Centre at 12.45pm. All proceeds to Christian Aid. Please RSVP by Thursday 14th May.

Broxbourne Food Bank IMPORTANT—PLEASE NOTE IT IS NOT CLOSING

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

Eco-hint for May 2026



Amanda writes:

Thanks and praise to God. All the trees are flowering at once. What a wonderful and uplifting sight. A worrying message from RSPB. A parasitic disease which affects the throat and gullet and makes swallowing difficult is causing deaths amongst birds using bird feeders. The disease spreads where birds congregate together, eg bird feeders and particularly on flat surfaces and in bird baths. It spreads more easily in summer and autumn.

The RSPB advice is to remove flat surfaces (yes, bird tables), to avoid filling bird feeders (during May to end October) with seed and peanuts (which attract large numbers of birds at a time). Small quantities of mealworms or fat balls/suet are ok.

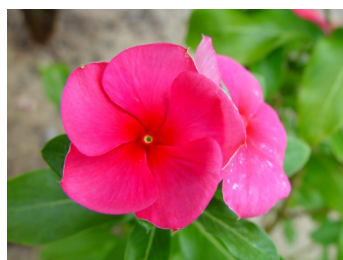
Scrub bird feeders at least once a week, and move to a different place. Clear up any debris under the bird feeder. Water should only be offered and changed daily. Bird baths need to be cleaned weekly. If you can, grow natural food such as sunflowers, teasels and ivy, which provide seed, berries and shelter for insects.

If you provide fresh fruit, I suggest you spear small pieces on branches at locations spread around the garden. This will also attract insects.

Grow flowers with different shapes of flowers (flat open eg poppy, bell shaped flowers eg small – blue-bells, large – foxgloves) daisy shaped) to attract different insects.

Leave small banks of nettles for butterflies/moths to lay their eggs and to feed caterpillars. (and these subsequently baby birds)

Warning to all lily growers! The red menace is active. If you see bites in the leaves of lily plants, look for red beetles (Long thin and no spots, so not round like ladybirds). Suggest you put something like a piece of paper or plastic under the plant before you check, as the beetles will drop off and are difficult to find when the red is hidden.



Isaiah 43:19:

*"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth,
do you not perceive it?"*

Dear all,

Welcome to this month's Pastorate update. As we continue to move forward together, the above words of the prophet speak with particular force to us in this season.

From Stepanka

Broxbourne Elders meeting took place on 8 April. It was the first Elders' meeting of the amalgamated church, marking the shared life of Broxbourne and Cheshunt as one eldership. The Joint Elders meeting will be held next Tuesday 28 April.

The following two events are taking place next month:

The Craft and Plant May Market at Broxbourne on Bank Holiday Monday, 4 May, from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm; and Hertford Church Anniversary Celebration on Sunday 24 May at 10:30 am.

Please spread the word and invite your friends and family. Posters for the events are attached.

The Pastorate website (www.nlv.org.uk) is another excellent way to promote the church services, events and activities. You can copy links to events and paste them into your emails, texts and social media posts.

The new location All Nations Christian College will be moving to has not yet been finalised due to the process being more challenging than expected. Please pray for wisdom for the Senior Leadership Team and Board as they move towards a final decision.

From Mark

This month, one of the great joys of our shared life was the Easter Day Communion and Welcome Service at United Reformed Church Broxbourne. It was a deeply meaningful occasion in which we celebrated the risen Christ and marked the coming together of Cheshunt Free Church and United Reformed Church Broxbourne as one local church. The service held together Easter faith, memory, thanksgiving, and new beginning with warmth and grace. It was especially good to see children involved throughout the worship, helping to lead, respond, pray, and take part in the symbols and movement of the service. Their presence brought life and energy to the morning and reminded us that the church's future is already among us and growing.

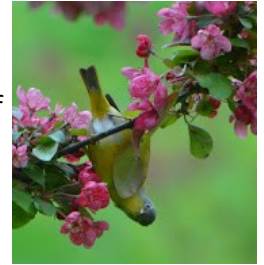
We were also grateful to receive messages of encouragement from the wider church through the Synod Moderator, Revd George Watt, and through Revd Martin Legg, the immediate Past Convenor of the Local Area Group. Their words helped place this moment within the wider life and witness of the church. It was heartening to see the church so full for the occasion, and the time of refreshments and fellowship afterwards was a real gift. People stayed, talked, greeted one another, and shared in the joy of the day. My sincere thanks go to all who prepared, served, and supported that time of hospitality. It strengthened the sense that this was a day of genuine welcome, shared thanksgiving, and renewed fellowship.

At Hertford URC, we have been encouraged by the growing work with local schools during the Easter season. Through this initiative, around 200 children were reached with the Easter story. John Ellis led a whole-school assembly at Millmead School, and we were also delighted to welcome, for the first time, two classes from St Andrew's School to hear the Easter story and learn something of the life of our church. The response has been heartening. The children from St Andrew's remained engaged throughout the visit and we heard that they were still speaking about it later in the day, with a wish to return again in future. We have also heard of at least one child from Millmead School going home and speaking with enthusiasm about the Easter story and the song they had learned. These are signs that seeds are being sown, and we give thanks for John's faithful and imaginative work in helping children engage with the story of Jesus in ways they can receive and remember.

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Alongside these developments, the marketing of the Cheshunt Free Church building is now moving ahead under the guidance of Rapleys. There has been strong interest, and a number of prospective parties are coming to view the building. This is an important stage in the process, and we continue to pray for wisdom and steadiness as matters progress. Although the Amalgamation Delivery Team has now held its last official meeting, members have agreed to remain available should help be needed. There is still work to do in ensuring that the remaining aspects of the amalgamation are carried through smoothly and well. I want to express my sincere thanks to Jill, Mary, Val, Dorothy, and David, who have worked faithfully together and each brought their own gifts, insight, and commitment to this significant undertaking. Their shared labour has helped bring us to this point with care and strength.



As we continue on, we do so with gratitude for all that has been given, and with hope for what God is still bringing to life among us.

Prayer

Living God,
we thank you for the ways your church is being renewed among us.
For worship filled with joy,
for children hearing the Easter story,
for fellowship shared around tables,
and for all who labour quietly and faithfully in the life of the church,
we give you thanks.
Guide us in the days ahead.

David Davies writes:

Zoe Hudson from Churches Together sent this invitation:

All are welcome to join us for semi-programmed meetings at the reopened Quaker Meeting House in Lord Street, Hoddesdon. Children and families are welcome and the meetings will be accessible and relaxed with some time for readings and quiet reflection.

Date: Sunday 12 April, and second Sunday each month following

Time: 2.30pm arrival, 3pm meeting for worship, 3.30ish tea and cake

Place: Hoddesdon Quaker meeting house, [55 Lord Street, Hoddesdon](#)

After the meeting we will also have the opportunity to enjoy our Peace Cottage community garden too! Any budding gardeners very welcome!



IN OUR CHURCH HALL— MAY

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|------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| 5th | 2.00pm | After Eights Wildlife Photography in Brazil | Mary and Graham Brace |
| 16th | 7.15 for 7.30pm | Hoddesdon Music Club AGM | 7.45 Andrew Massey Duo |
| 21st | 7.30 pm for coffee before 7.50 start, | Lowood Society | The Gosse Family of Hoddesdon and Adelaide Sue Garside |
| 26th | 7.45 for 8PM | SE Herts RSPB Butterflies and Moths | Andrew Wood, Herts Butterfly Recorder. |

Mark writes:

Trust and a Question Worth Asking

When Translation Shapes What We See

When we read the Bible, we are usually reading a translation.

That means someone has made careful decisions about how words from Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek should be carried into English. Most of the time, we open the Bible, hear the words, and receive them as Scripture.

Yet translation shapes what we see.

In Acts 1, Jesus is taken up, and the disciples are left looking. Some English translations say they were looking “towards heaven.” Others say they were looking “into the sky.”

The Greek word is ouranos. It can mean heaven. It can also mean sky.

If we hear “sky,” we may picture the disciples looking upwards into the clouds. If we hear “heaven,” we may think of Jesus returning to the presence of God.

Both are close to the passage. The question is what the text is inviting us to understand.

Acts tells us that Jesus was taken up, and a cloud hid him from their sight. The passage bears witness to who Jesus is. The risen Christ is taken into the life and presence of God, and the disciples are prepared for the coming of the Spirit and the work of witness.

This is where we need to trust Scripture enough to read it carefully.

Sometimes confusion comes from assuming that one English word carries the whole meaning of the original text. Careful reading shows us that a biblical word may have a wider range of meaning than we first realised.

So here is an exercise for this month:

Read Acts 1:9–11 in two or three different Bible translations.

Ask:

What words are used: heaven, sky, or something else?

What picture does each translation create in your mind?

What does the passage actually say?

What have I assumed it says?

What is the main point of the passage?

And here is the question worth asking together:

When translations differ, do we become anxious, or do we become more curious?

And if God speaks through Scripture, what might careful reading teach us about trust?

May CRAFT & PLANT Market

Lots of help needed Setting up beforehand. Selling from 1.30pm to 4.30pm and clearing up afterwards. Could you relieve somebody for an hour or so?

Rosemary writes:

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!)

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